



# Civil Society as the agent for Change: What Works

Healthy Caribbean 2008  
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# Objectives of presentation

- Define civil society and differences with government and commercial organizations
- Describe major roles of civil society
- Describe major tools of civil society
  - Advocacy
  - Coalition building
  - Public information and media campaigns
  - Monitoring and evaluation

# Key message

- Governments of the Caribbean and PAHO are already working on the implementation of the POS Declaration
- Civil society must be a major partner in this effort and it can make the difference between success and failure
- Civil society must play its role forcefully, strengthening its present role and using the tools at its disposal

# Complementary approaches to chronic disease prevention

## Individual responsibility

Health education and individual approaches frequently help the higher SES groups

INDIVIDUAL  
CHANGE



Changes to the  
"toxic" environment

POLICY CHANGE

Smokefree environments

Warning labels

Food labeling

Safe spaces for physical activity

Availability and affordability of fruits & vegetables

Adapted from Puska P, 2001



InterAmerican  
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# What is civil society

- The totality of voluntary civic and social organizations and institutions
- Forms the basis of a functioning democratic society
- As distinct from
  - state (regardless of that state's political system) and
  - commercial institutions/business

From: Center for Civil Society, London School of Economics and Political Science





# Civil society includes

- *registered charities*
- *non-governmental organisations*
- *community groups*
- *women's organisations*
- *faith-based organisations*
- *professional associations*
- *trades unions*
- *self-help groups*
- *social movements*
- *business associations*
- *coalitions and advocacy groups*



# Government



- Power of the state
- Is responsible for public health
- Limited by political changes
- Possible changes in priorities
- May apply large financial resources if there is political will, or lose them
- Government employees have to present official position only

## ■ Gov't networks



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# Civil Society

- Independent of gov't
- Greater freedom to act
- Altruistic mission towards common good
- Greater consistency—not as influenced by political winds
- May support and pressure gov't from the outside
- Other networks (scientific, businesses)
- Expert volunteers
- Relation to media
- Additional funding to cause

# The roles of Civil Society

# Role of Civil Society: Advocate

- Promote a favorable public opinion
- Support gov't if doing what is necessary
- Identify legislative priorities and help develop legislative measures
- Presents a powerful, respectable and trustworthy image.

# Role of Civil Society: Provider of evidence-based info

- Inform policy decisions
- Translates science for use by policy makers, media and the public

# Healthcare Guidelines

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## AACVPR/ACC/AHA PERFORMANCE MEASURES

### AACVPR/ACC/AHA 2007 Performance Measures on Cardiac Rehabilitation for Referral to and Delivery of Cardiac Rehabilitation/Secondary Prevention Services

*Endorsed by the American College of Chest Physicians, American College of Sports Medicine,  
American Physical Therapy Association, Canadian Association of Cardiac Rehabilitation,  
European Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation, Inter-American Heart  
Foundation, National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists, Preventive Cardiovascular  
Nurses Association, and the Society of Thoracic Surgeons*

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# Technical and Scientific support



## Higher Tobacco Taxes Reduce Tobacco Use

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*"The most effective way to deter children from taking up smoking is to increase taxes on tobacco. High prices prevent some children and adolescents from starting and encourage those who already smoke to reduce their consumption."*

*– World Bank, Curbing the Epidemic, 1999*

Increasing tobacco taxes is a Win, Win for governments:

- **Public Health Win** – Higher tobacco taxes help prevent kids from starting to smoke and encourage smokers to quit, thus reducing the terrible toll on public health from tobacco use.
- **Fiscal Win** – Despite the inevitable declines in tobacco use, tobacco tax increases produce significant revenue for governments to fund important projects. In addition, the reduction in smoking rates also leads to a reduction in tobacco-related health care costs—many of which are born by governments and taxpayers.



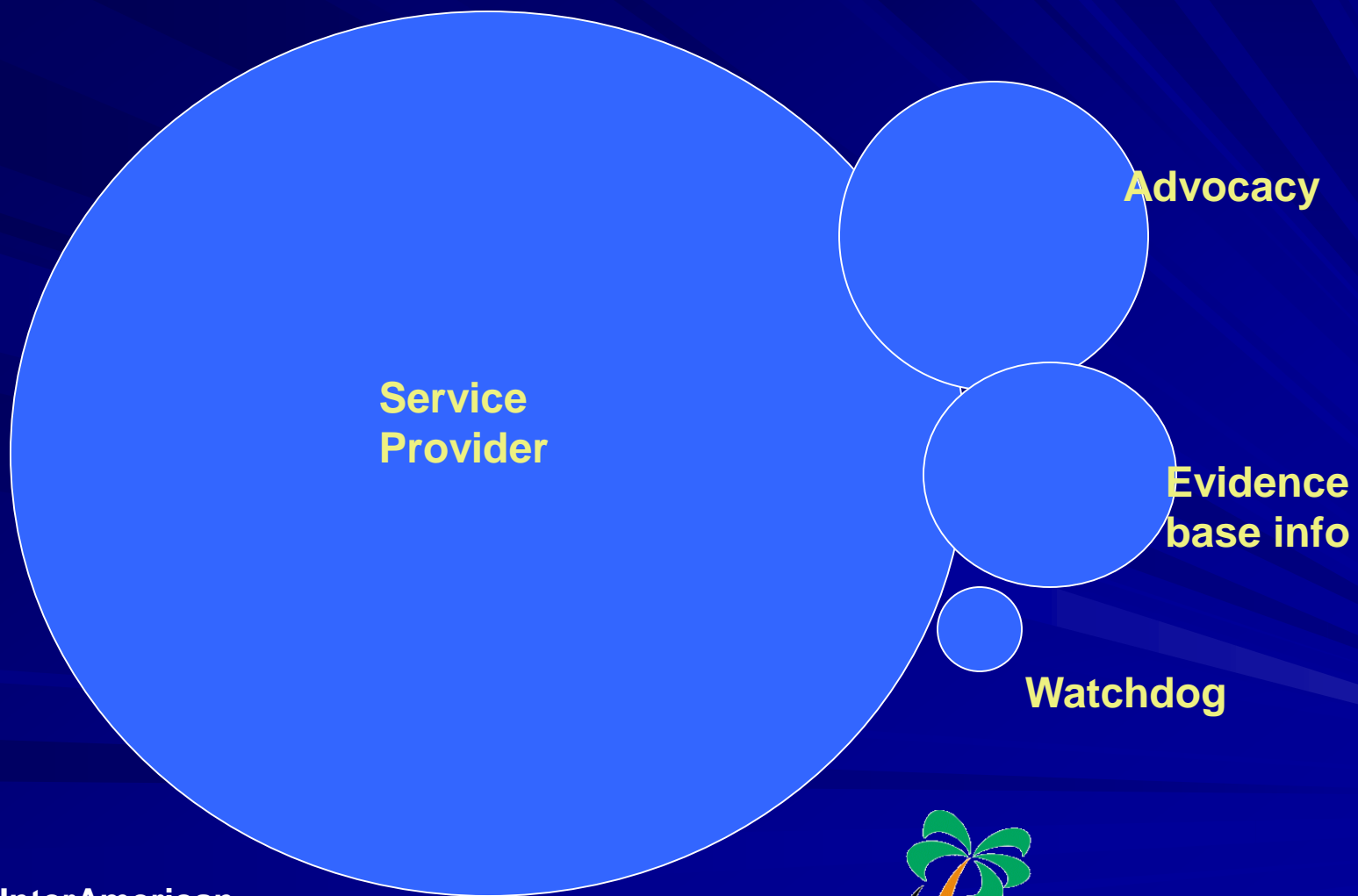
# Role of Civil Society: Watchdog



- “Report cards” and “shadow reporting”
- Independent monitoring & evaluation

# Role of Civil Society: Service provider

- Screening for risk factors
- Counseling
- Provide medications
- Rehab for cardiac patients
- Provide treatment to the poor



# Civil Society to do what?



**It turns out we know exactly what to do:**

**Prevention works**



**It's simple, affordable and effective**

# Tobacco

- Objective: “To protect present and future generations from the devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke.” (FCTC, Art. 3)
- ACTIONS: Implement FCTC (legal obligation for those that ratified)
  - Taxation
  - Smokefree environments
  - Reducing smuggling
  - Warning Labels
  - Banning publicity, sponsorship and promotion

# Obesity



■ **Objective: Reduce overweight and obesity**

■ **ACTIONS:**

■ Economic and other incentives to ↓ sugar, fat and salt in diet and ↑ fruits and vegetables

■ Community-wide consumer education

■ Food labeling

■ Ban trans fats

■ Nutritional standards for food in all government facilities/schools

■ Limit/abolish all marketing to children

■ Policies supporting breast feeding

# Physical Activity

- Objective: To increase physical activity
- ACTIONS:
  - Daily school physical activity (60 min.)
  - Community after-school physical activity
  - Availability and accessibility of spaces for physical activity
  - Progressively adapt towns to favour pedestrian/cycling with car restrictions

# Individual approaches

- Treatment for smokers
- Screening, early diagnosis, counseling and treatment
  - Hypertension
  - Diabetes
  - Obesity
- Rehabilitation programs





# Civil Society's Tool Kit



# Strategic planning for policy change

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- Q1: What do we want?
- Q2: Who in Government can make it happen?
- Q3: Who in Gov't can influence the process?
- Q4: What do they need to hear to persuade them to act?
- Q5: What messages speak to the Brain & the Heart?
- Q6: Who are the most effective messengers for our target audience?
- Q7: What are the most effective means for delivering our messages?
- Q8: What are effective ways to gain the media's attention with stories that best convey our messages?
- Q9: What other materials do we need for our campaign?

# Advocacy: What is it

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- Can mean different things for different people.
- Advocate for a cause...
- *The act of speaking or of disseminating information intended to influence:*
  - *individual behaviour or opinion*
  - *corporate conduct*
  - *public policy and law*
- Advocacy - lobbying, government relations, influencing legislators/bureaucrats

## Advocacy

- Regular contact with legislators
- Press politicians to document and make public their support
- Provide Gov't Ministries and legislators evidence-based information and options for legislation
- Contact representatives of key Ministries
- Watch for political change within gov't

# Different styles of advocacy



Negotiate,  
Collaborate

Activism and  
Collaboration



Aggressive



# How to influence government

- Two strategies: Pressure or Cooperation
- Situations:
  - Does not take on responsibility: Pressure
  - Sensible to issue: Cooperation
  - Different positions within government:  
cooperate with some and pressure others

# Ex: International/Domestic Letter-writing Campaigns

- Electronic petitions

<http://petition.globalink.org/>

<http://fctc.org/action/index.shtml>

- Fax, letters, phone calls

# 3

## Coalition Building

- An alliance of groups that have formalized their collective relationships for joint action on one or more issues.
- Around a platform or declaration that many can join



# Mobilise others







# Reasons for Coalition

- Increases resources (and allows economic use of shared resources)
- Increases visible support for goal
- Creates common front (and consistent messages)
- Educates and mobilises concerned citizens & groups
- Expands reach of campaign



# Media campaigns

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- Reach the public and policy makers via the media
- Earned media
  - Unpaid publicity
  - Press conference, media briefings
  - “Creating” news
- Paid media
  - TV and radio to reach masses
  - Very costly

# Public information campaigns

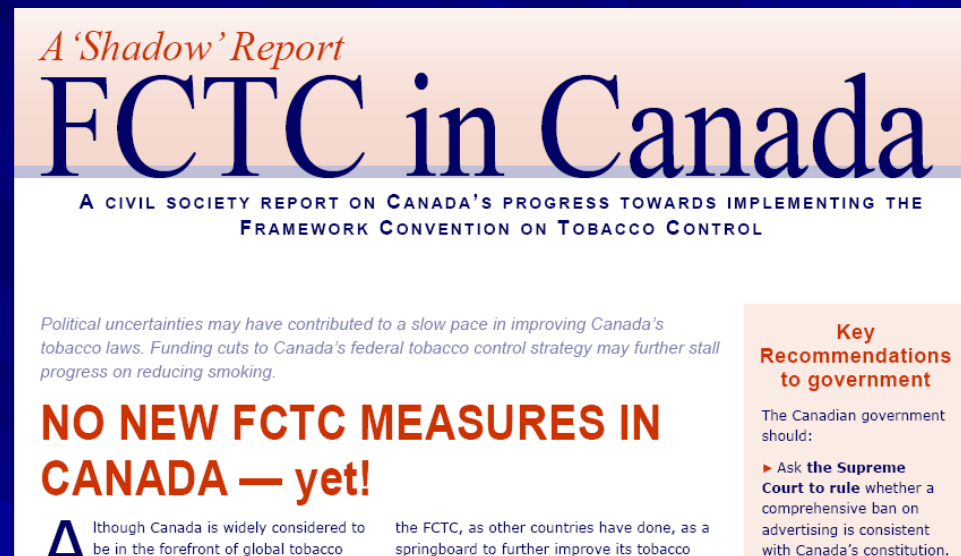
- Direct to the public information
- Ex: Caribbean Wellness Day

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# Independent monitoring and evaluation

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- Public opinion polling
- Report cards
- Policy analysis
- Media monitoring
- Industry monitoring
- Social and political environment
- Specific: air monitoring, store shelf space, compliance with bans



# Conclusions

- Enormous opportunity at this conference to rev up the engine of civil society in the Caribbean
- Civil society must be a major partner in this effort
- Civil society must play its role forcefully, strengthening its present role and using the tools at its disposal

# Finally...

If citizen action is to be successful it requires  
careful preparation,  
effective organization and stamina.  
Lots and lots of stamina.

- John Gardner in *Common Cause*