The Youth Work Lobbyist

Shaping Government Relations and Making Politicians Listen
Lobbyist clichés
Is that you?
Who are you? Why should I listen? What can you do for me?
The Youth Work Lobbyist

1. A Lobbyist’s Craft
2. Counsel to Kings
3. Making Strategy
Youth work is, in many ways, about advocacy and representation. First, youth work aims to grow young people’s involvement and participation in society. Youth are encouraged to make themselves heard so they can overcome their marginal presence and influence public decisions. In this sense, youth work is about empowering active citizenship. Second, youth workers are themselves advocates and representatives. When they speak for and on behalf of young people as clients, youth workers articulate legitimate interests and promote goals for youth policy and youth-connected issues and causes. They help organize and mobilize communities and constituencies. An interest group has higher capacity for external influence.

Third, youth workers represent their own vocation. Their professionalism includes a responsibility to weigh in on public policy-making on behalf of their own vocation and colleagues. Youth workers aim to be publicly recognized for their qualifications and responsible practice, to protect their values and job autonomy, and to shape public decisions that affect their jobs and budgets that pay for them.

In all three areas, it is necessary to find access and communication channels. Policy-makers should receive accurate, complete, valid, fair, and persuasive information about beneficial or adverse effects of a policy decision at the right time. Moreover, because most policy-makers are not experts, there is a need for continuous issue education and concrete advice about youth issues. Working within the policy-making process, which is a competitive environment, requires a political mindset, political skills, and strategy. When they are combined for an attempt to directly influence institutional decision-making on a certain project with persuasive communication, then this is what, generally speaking, constitutes “lobbying.”

It seems that lobbying is only what interest groups do from the outside of government. But parts of governments also lobby each other. They, too, build networks, liaisons, and coalitions with like-minded offices and external groups. They, too, try to shape media and public perception in order to gain legitimacy for their claims and demands. They, too, want support for policy positions, projects, programs, and budget requests for staff and money. They, too, rival with others for resources. Whether they call it lobbying or not, they pursue lobbying strategies.

Lobbying may work through various channels: inside or outside, more formal or more informal. Youth work may be represented on formal, institutionalized platforms, for example a youth council or youth policy advisory panel that works in
A Lobbyist’s Craft
Who Does It? Various Organizations with In-House and External (Contract) Lobbyists

- Business Companies
- Trade Associations
- Labor Unions & Professional Associations
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Consultants Agencies & Law Firms
- Think Tanks Institutes, foundations, forums
- Government Authorities (all levels)
- Public Agencies (all levels)
Youth Work

Lobbyist

Know the players

Tell the story, make it matter

Analyze priorities & the politics

Build support

Find windows of opportunity
Direct Lobbying, Defined

1. A project-based attempt to influence,
2. with a **concrete** project goal,
3. elected or appointed public officials (or their staff)
4. in a decision-making process which **formulates or implements** public **policy** (legislative or administrative),
5. by persons who do **not formally** participate in the decision-making,
6. in **direct contact through informal interactions** (oral or written, regardless of event, format or channel)
**Indirect Lobbying, Defined**

1. Aims to **support direct lobbying**
2. by influencing other **influencers** in the decision-makers’ environment (e.g. colleagues, opinion leaders, experts)
   or
3. **mass media** with targeted or broad appeals in order to shape public debates & public opinion,
   or
4. mobilizing **citizens to contact** elected representatives or appointed authorities in **grassroots campaigns**.

Youth Work

Lobbyist
Lobbyists know policy... but also the politics of policy.
Lobbying is a service for policymakers. Help them do their work better and faster (and look good doing it).
Bribes, Blondes, and Booze? No, Good Lobbyists Provide Practical Political Value

Arguments

Problem Definitions

Solutions

Competitive Advantage

Access to & Support of a Policy Community

Detailed data, facts, authentic stories

Channels to Voters

Political Intelligence

The Youth Work Lobbyist
“It is the practice of kings to make to themselves many eyes and ears and hands and feet, for they make colleagues of those who are the friends of themselves and their governments.”

Aristotle, Politics
350 B.C.
Counsel to Kings
Counsel - The Politician's Ancient Problem

- Taking the right advice
- Take advice right

- Choose advisers
- Control advisers' access and competition
Advisers Offer Judgment on Policy Choices

- Support the decision-making process
- Clarify problems and alternative solutions
- Improve rationality
- Clarify trade-offs
- Help explain and legitimize choices
Advice is useful if it takes the *perspective of the receiver*:

- Serves information need and time budget
- Fits with interest, specialization, and constituency
- Shows advantages for clients, party, office, person etc.
- Considers feasibility and process management
The Pragmatist Policymaker

World View

- #1: Survival in office
- Policy-making is part of the “game” of politics
- Elected to “get things done”
- Context: incrementalism / muddling through, legal & budget constraints, rivalries for power and resources

Key Rhetoric

- Friends/allies, enemies, loyalty, favors, deals, reputation
- Claim credit
- Shift blame to others
- Show empathy with constituents
- Show “decider” ability

Making Strategy
Navigating the Institutional Corridors

PRESS START

100% 0%

SMS: 10/17
e-mail: 6/25
calls: 0/0
What exactly do you want your target to DO?
What exactly do you want your target to DO?

(It’s too often unclear.)
Do you want to change speed and direction of political processes?
Stay Course? Redirect?
Broaden? Narrow?
Deal with roadblocks, accidents, errors?
Choose your target audience(s)
The politician is a human being. The politician’s targets—citizens and voters—are humans, too.

Political response is low-information rationality: heads, hearts, and guts.
People are complicated.

Does your policy idea fit with policy culture, actors and institutions?

Pain and gain: What is the political cost of transformation, compared to the desired result?
Make parties the friend and carrier of your policy idea.

Respect politics’ need for groups and organization. Know the passions and beliefs that drive a party. Make your proposals compatible.
Politics is an endless stop-and-go game. Be patient, but be ready to speed up fast.

All is fluid, and authority is fragmented. Politicians make daily choices about timing of initiatives, appeals, and conflicts.

I’m confused... What exactly do they want me to do?

Don’t forget to pitch.
Youth workers, if you can handle difficult teenagers, you can handle politicians and bureaucrats!
There are plenty of lobbying how-to books, some specifically for not-for-profit workers

Browse, and start reading for developing your skills. Just one reading tip for change-makers...

Multi Level Governance

Layer Cake?

Marble Cake!
Multi Level Governance

Local Government
Public Trust in Regional and Local Authorities 2008–17

EB - EU: 28,055 Respondents, 5.-14.11.2017

EU average, 28 countries

Tend to trust

Tend to distrust
Countries differ... a lot.
Public Trust in Professional Groups:
Civil Servants, Mayors, and Politicians 2017
23,519 Respondents worldwide (20 countries), Germany 2056 Respondents
Integrating civil society organizations in the production and distribution of local services

Government decides alone

No institutional pluralism

Information provider

Scout

Government decides together with civil society organizations

Accepted institutional pluralism

Co-producer

Steering object

Active petitioner

Sharing clients

Contract partner

Consultant

Functional integration

Strategic cooperation