

decisions.”¹⁰

NGOs are struggling not only with how to apply “public engagement” approaches, but also to link them to the emerging NGO policy dialogue and advocacy agenda. Since recent research points out that the public wants to pursue its “instinct for making connections”¹¹, developing a comprehensive policy agenda is a good starting point.

Funding

Recent funding cutbacks (and growing fundraising competition) have meant resources for policy have begun to recede. Some NGOs which had dedicated policy staff resources have reduced those commitments.

The decline of CIDA funding for NGOs has exceeded that of the overall decline of ODA as the agency shifts resource spending to favour business and other non-governmental sectors such as universities.

There is a need to avoid a gap between public donors’ expectations of where their donor dollar goes (usually seen as being applied for overseas programs) and investment in Canada-based policy activities. In an era of growing “donor choice”, will policy work receive the donor dollar when the overwhelming public perception is that the purpose of aid lies in its humanitarian work?

Alternate institutional funding sources are few and far between as Canada’s philanthropic foundations (unlike their American

¹⁰ See “Public Engagement + Meaningful Chaos”, a resource of materials available on the Newsgroup “ccic.policy.issues” found on Web.Net.

¹¹ See The Harwood Group, Meaningful Chaos.