

So, what does the future hold for NCIA?

Notes from our planning group on 24 May 2012 to discuss what we can do in the next couple of years. Click [here](#) to read Penny's background paper '[NCIA: What next?](#)'.

This is what we came up with:

What NCIA has done over the last 2/3 years and what has been useful

- Anti-privatisation stance and position papers – a thinking resource
- Having a clear ideological position & argument, principles and political analysis – a pioneering approach
- Assemblies, networking and events to meet kindred spirits, a home for people to meet people, having conversations and making links, keeping the network going, communications with peop
- Website and newsletter
- Research, youth work case studies and other tangible products
- Locally based workle
- Speaking at events, raising issues, keeping issues on the agenda & saying things that others won't say, opportunistic actions that bear fruit (eg. irate email to TUC, leading to a blossoming relationship)
- Support to other campaigns
- Independence audit
- Getting money, employing staff, alliances fund

What NCIA could have done differently, to be more successful

- More profile raising in the mainstream, by NCIA and its partners
- More social networking
- Clearer outcomes for what we want to achieve – who do we want to reach? What do we want to happen? Not enough clear examples of “this is what NCIA is about”.
- Stop trying to be a movement and recognise the “think tank” role [definition of a movement is “a constituency of popular support”] – movements are not made, they happen by themselves
- Not enough specific work on issues affecting the population eg. housing, refugees....Need to create alliances with people/groups active in these fields, but don't parachute in – editorialise and reflect
- Find the voices of dissent – the landscape is so negative, so need to sort out what can be saved
- Support groups that are being attacked or are resisting a negative direction of travel eg. housing co-ops, local Age Concern groups unwilling to go along with corporate approaches of Age UK – help them develop and publicise their positions
- Need to make alliances, but also need to fight with some people within our own sector – whistle blowing & speaking out
- Why doesn't NCIA make contact and get support from backbench MPs?

What should NCIA's priorities be for the next 2/3 years? The what and the how

- Managerialism – counteract management speak, highlight the ideology, clarify power dynamics. Do it in a popular way, using real issues and examples, for every criticism a

realistic, positive alternative, support “self-organising” approaches as a counterbalance to managerialism

- Local engagement on anti privatisation issues – rally other groups to be bottom up, more focus on action by non-professionals, don’t parachute in but create local relationships, focus on learning
- Commissioning – keep on exposing incompetence, tell stories, take the piss regularly, a Bill of Rights for vol.orgs going into commissioning (and one to one support in doing it?), explain the takeover by the private sector
- Create alliances – as a means to an end, not an end in itself. Actions under a NCIA banne
- Examples of people who are trying different things to resist cooption of voluntary action
- Keep a safe space – assemblies, events, fringe events at bigger conferences
- A think tank role – have a manifesto for a future vision, give examples of what people are doing in this, know the NCIA niche and provide tangible expressions

General points

Local engagement - we have limited resources to connect with people locally, so we need to resolve where we put our time and how locally. You have to be in the local area to work locally and it needs resources to make that happen. What can we offer to local groups eg. something on commissioning for local CVSSs? Realistic NCIA role for local work might be to gather local intelligence and stories to broadcast and amplify to a wider audience and to develop resources for others to use locally. Focus on a small number of geographical places and activities. Local work needs to be less scattergun and have a strategic purpose. Our positions need to be underpinned by local experiences.

Working through others - use the connections/resources available from supporter partners eg. FCDL. Get local groups going and support them eg. starfish groups being developed by CDX

Dissent – we need to support progressive dissent and self-organising as an alternative to professionalism and managerialism. This will involve organising safe spaces and social networks for resistance which can take off quickly. We need an Assembly at least once a year. There will always need to be a safe place for dissenters, whether through NCIA or otherwise

Open minds - NCIA will need to be open to change in its own messages, as well as seeking changes from others. In this we need a balance between having our own intentions but also knowing “how to loiter with intent” to grab opportunities

Communicating the message – our message needs to create a response of “they’re right you know”. The example of “Republic” was given, where the message is clear and righteous. We need a database of friendly journalists/media

The end of NCIA - does NCIA need to exist forever as an outsider voice, or can its ideas be integrated into the work of others? How will we know when to step out and when we’ve succeeded enough. Need to be able to complete the following: we will only stop IF.....? Are enough other people now talking about our issues? Writing is on the wall for NCIA, there is

no obvious source of continued funding and there is a limit to its stamina. So need to use next tranche of money to exit.