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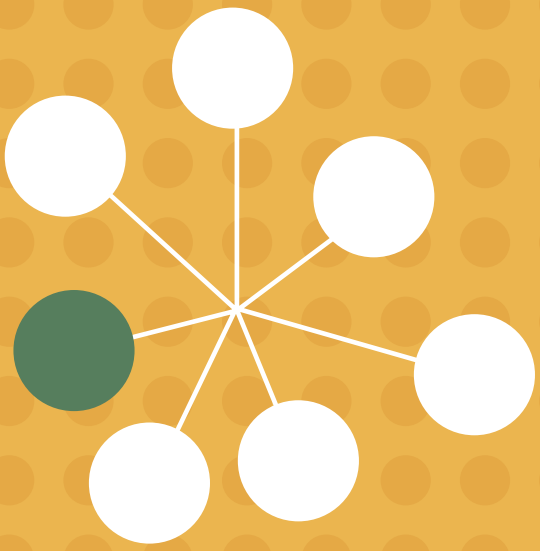
SPEAKING UP!

FOUNDATIONS AND ADVOCACY IN EUROPE



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Foundations and Advocacy in Europe

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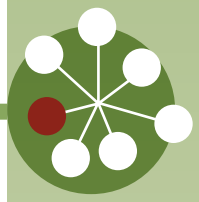

This guide explores advocacy in the European context and how actual advocacy strategies are developed and implemented by foundations. European countries have very diverse traditions in philanthropy and many (operational) foundations not only fund advocacy but directly influence policy agendas through their operational programmes. The interactions between local and national governments as well as the European Institutions create distinct and complex environments in which public policies are shaped. This guide builds on the GrantCraft guide published in 2005 on advocacy practices of United States (US) grantmakers and grantees.

This guide was written by Lucia Montanaro with contributions from Emmanuelle Faure and Hanna Surmatz. Triona Keaveney edited the document. Zsofia Lang drew the cartoons and provided assistance to the project.

This guide is part of the GrantCraft series. Resources in this series are not meant to give instructions or prescribe solutions; rather they are intended to spark ideas, stimulate discussion and suggest possibilities.

GrantCraft is a joint project of the Foundation Center in the United States and the European Foundation Centre based in Belgium. For further information please contact Rosien Herweijer in Brussels (rherweijer@efc.be) or Lisa Philp in New York City (llp@foundationcenter.org).

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"A" for Advocacy

On paper, advocacy may be one simple word but its meaning can vary greatly between foundations across Europe. These diverse interpretations can be explained in part by the various cultural, political, social, economic and legal contexts that make up Europe, but are also related to the specificities found within the mission and operational cultures of European foundations. And yet, as seen from the interviews conducted, foundations have clearly found some common meaning and vocabulary to describe the scope of activities which they undertake and support in the name of advocacy.

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF CONTRASTS AND COMMONALITIES

Foundation practitioners in Europe translate advocacy into a very wide and varied set of activities, ambitions and outcomes, ranging from making their voices heard and having their views taken into account, to triggering and instigating policy change. Certain terms recur such as "policy work", which can be broadly interpreted as any "activities aimed to influence policy implementation and change", although its use and scope is varied. The selection of quotes below clearly illustrates the contrasts and commonalities in the ways advocacy is defined and approached by European foundations:

- "Influencing the debate."
- "Stimulating the public debate."
- "Raising awareness."
- "Fostering democratic processes by enriching the debate."
- "Influencing policy makers, and government, and regulators to ensure that our views and those of our researchers are taken into account."
- "Making voices heard in line with our mission and objectives."
- "Convincing the government that an issue merits attention."
- "Cogently conveying an idea or a position."
- "Acting in a political landscape, and forming and sharing opinions."
- "Trying to shift behaviours, attitudes and policies."
- "Influencing public policies and strategies which can help the development of a certain area."
- "Influencing public policy change."
- "Triggering change within a certain context."
- "Encouraging both policy and legislative change at regional, national, and European level."
- "Following policy-making (at regional, national and European Union level) and trying to shape public policy by proactively contributing to the political debate."
- "Influencing the opinion or action of others on matters of public concern."

- "Making a political difference by pursuing political change in different policy fields."
- "Attempting to change policy, practice and/or attitudes in an organised way by presenting evidence and arguments for how and why change should happen."
- "[Drawing up] a suite of recommendations that we are shaping into a roadmap to be presented to politicians and policymakers this year."

These various interpretations make it clear that early on in their discussions, foundations, their partners and/or grantees should establish a clear definition of advocacy. Foundations can save a lot of time, energy and resources by being explicit on the kind of advocacy they will or will not support.

DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

On first inspection, it might seem like nothing more than an argument over semantics, but the distinction between advocacy and lobbying runs much deeper. For many foundations and NGOs in Europe, there is a big difference in the drivers behind these concepts: While lobbying is driven by private, commercial or political party agendas, many foundations see advocacy as the pursuit of public-benefit-related issues within a public policy framework.

Certain foundations go further and detail the activities that may be covered by these terms. For instance, trying to influence a particular piece of legislation should be considered lobbying, while advocacy should be qualified as anything from influencing general public opinion, campaigning for a cause, to denouncing infringements of the law and fighting for their just application.

But the line between lobbying and advocacy is far from clear in the minds of many foundations. One practitioner notes: "As long as the aim is to change legislation for the public benefit, then it is advocacy." Another interviewee sees the distinction deriving from the negative connotations associated with the word lobbying: "We call advocacy oftentimes lobbying for a cause of general interest. So it is the same activity as lobbying, but not for a

Stories from the biased, the neutral and the new kids on the block

For the purpose of this guide, we analysed publications and websites and conducted over 30 interviews with staff from foundations all over Europe, namely Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Additionally some foundations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) shared stories through an online survey.

Our sample is biased towards foundations that are active in advocacy or funding such work. Rather than understand why foundations choose to engage or not in advocacy, we primarily wanted to explore how foundations in Europe are doing this work.

Nonetheless, we did come across several foundations that said that they would not engage in advocacy, as they wished to remain neutral. This question is a matter for much debate among foundations. Some practitioners strongly disagree with the notion of impartiality: "This is the core of the debate within the foundation sector. There are foundations that are not neutral but they would argue they are. And there is also this whole charade of, 'it's not us, we just fund other people', and I think it is a way of refusing to nail your colours to a mast. Once you put money somewhere, once you make a funding decision you are absolutely an intervener in the game. So no foundation that is funding something is ever neutral." Others argue that foundations are biased at the point of choosing which topic to support, after which their position can stay impartial, because they develop their position listening to the views and voices of a broad and diverse group of stakeholders.

Other reasons as to why foundations may not engage in advocacy came to light during the process. An executive of one foundation – which only recently entered the advocacy arena – explained that the decision to fund such work had required very lengthy discussions within their board, which was very concerned by the reputational risk involved. Other foundations mentioned that they thought there may be legal impediments to engaging in advocacy.

Ways to Use This Guide

You can use this guide as a basis to discuss advocacy with your colleagues, board, partners and grantees. Specifically, the guide can help you to establish a common understanding of advocacy, as well as to discuss what best describes how advocacy is done in your foundation and how you may wish your advocacy to be developed in the future.

You can use the guide to prepare for a discussion around three key questions:

What value would doing or funding advocacy add to your programmes?

What value can your foundation bring to advocacy for certain causes that are related to its missions and priorities?

What is the theory of change behind your (grantees'/partners') approach in advocacy?

If you are not a foundation, you can read this guide to deepen your understanding of advocacy and foundations in Europe. It may help you to reflect on how to partner with foundations in Europe around advocacy-related issues.

private interest but for something which is of general and public interest. Because of the connotations we don't use lobby. Yet, in the end, advocacy is trying to make your case to decision-makers, which (ironically) is lobbying."

The European regulatory framework recognises that different interests can be represented legitimately by different entities, be they businesses or foundations pursuing commercial or public interests. At the level of the EU Institutions advocacy for public interests does not seem to be treated differently from lobby for private interest and the two terms – advocacy and lobby - are used interchangeably.

SETTING YOUR OWN BOUNDARIES

Foundations that engage in advocacy generally feel strongly that there are certain boundaries that cannot be crossed. Some of these limitations are set by the foundations themselves. For example, a foundation's statutes or the interpretation thereof by boards and trustees may rule out advocacy or fail to inspire direct advocacy activities.

Interpretation is a key in this, as explained by one practitioner: Advocacy must respect the boundaries of the values, vision and goals of the foundation but, "most foundations have the goal of wanting to make our society better, promote a common good, so it should not be a problem to do advocacy." Overcoming such limitations is possible, however, says one (grant-making) practitioner, whose foundation broadened its statutes from funding scientific fellowships to include the promotion of environmental sustainability. The funding of advocacy activities, together with an academic portfolio, is now part and parcel of the foundation's strategy.

There are other boundaries which foundations must self-manage. For instance, foundations with strong links to commercial companies have to be careful to avoid engaging in advocacy in the same areas as their mother company. Foundations have been challenged and their independence questioned when they fail to steer clear of advocacy work that seemingly overlaps with the commercial interests of their funder: "To avoid any possible misunderstandings due to the strong coincidence between commercial interests and public-benefit interests of the foundation, we simply decided to stop our work in a specific field."

Some interviewees feel that such ethical boundaries have to be managed on a case-by-case basis: "There are ethical boundaries that foundations should never transgress. It depends very much on the issue at hand." Transparency, disclosure and inclusion are aspects that influence what foundations consider to be ethically-good advocacy: "If you are doing good advocacy, it has to be as transparent as possible, this means you need to be able to explain why you are doing it, to present a reasonable set of arguments for the case that you are making. You are not necessarily working behind curtains."

LEGAL CONTEXTS AND FRAMEWORKS

In the US, advocacy and lobbying are regulated by law in great detail. Particularly tax legislation sets boundaries. Therefore in doing advocacy or funding public-benefit organisations to do advocacy or lobby, US foundations tread very carefully. In Europe foundations exercise similar care but the legislation and cultural practices regarding influencing policies and legislation vary from country to country. In Europe, overall, foundations may be actively engaged in shaping public policy, so long as the activity is in line with or furthers the foundation's public-benefit purposes. Being active in advocacy work must be distinguished from funding party politics, which is not possible in most cases in Europe or has to follow specific requirements. Some European Member States also have a clear prohibition on political activities for tax-exempt public-benefit organisations.

To illustrate the various approaches that Member States have developed, some examples are briefly described below:

German tax law states for example that public-benefit tax-exempt organisations may not engage in political activities or support political parties. A German public-benefit tax-exempt organisation may however advocate or lobby for amendments to legislation in order to support its public benefit purposes. It may even spend any amount on advocacy purposes as long as this is in line with its public-benefit mission[1].

The Dutch tax law does not prohibit political or lobbying purposes in general – the function of political parties in representing the view of the Dutch people and in turn therefore as supporting democracy qualifies them as philanthropic organisations. Philanthropic organisations in the Netherlands can represent minority interests. There does however seem to be a prohibition, adhered to by the Supreme Court, on activities that are in conflict with Dutch public policy interests.

In England and Wales, charity law and case law pose certain limits to advocacy, in relation to both the proportion of the activities it represents and to the requirement that the advocacy be in line with the charitable objectives that have been previously agreed: a charity may engage in campaigning or political activity only to further or support its charitable purpose, provided this is not prohibited by the governing document. Such activities must represent a legitimate and reasonable way for the trustees to further those purposes, and must never be party political. Political activity cannot be the only way in which a charity pursues its charitable purposes. The supervisory authority for charities in England and Wales, the Charity Commission, issues specific guidance for charities to support their decision making on what activities are or are not appropriate during the period from the date a local or national election or referendum is called until the date it takes place.

The Act 50/2002 of Foundations in **Spain** expressly recognises the existence of foundations linked to political parties. According to the text, the resources of these foundations "may come from public funding through the budgets of the various public authorities under the terms established in the budget legislation applicable and, if necessary, through appropriate public announcements/calls." In principle, the tax treatment for foundations linked to political parties is no different from any other foundation.

The Czech law allows public-benefit foundations to support advocacy work that influences public policy, and this does not put the tax-exempt status at risk. Several Czech foundations have been involved in the discussions around the new Czech civil code, new public-benefit status law etc. However, the foundation law (and the new civil law if entered into force) prohibits public-benefit foundations from undertaking/supporting (party) political activities.

In Poland, there are no limits on the amount/type of advocacy work that influences public policy that public-benefit foundations may undertake. Public-benefit organisations/foundations may undertake any kind of advocacy work as long as it is in line

1 Note that in Germany there are also so-called political foundations. These fall outside the scope of this guide.

with the mission and aims described in their statutes/charter. They may present opinions and recommendations for concrete pieces of legislation; participate in public hearings and meetings of parliamentary commissions; write to and petition the authorities; and demand and participate in public consultations on local and national level. However, Polish electoral law does not allow foundations and public-benefit organisations to participate in political campaigns on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. It does not allow foundations to establish electoral committees and campaign for their candidates or financially support committees set up by other parties. While there are no special provisions in Polish law that would explicitly prohibit public-benefit organisations from undertaking party political work, since such a sphere of activity is neither on the list of public-benefit aims nor is it listed in the tax law, the implication is that it will be considered in violation of the law and would not lead to tax privileges.

"[We] need to seek to search out the underlying causes of weakness or evil rather than remedying their more superficial manifestations."

This is only a sample of the different frameworks and contexts in Europe. At the end of this guide some resources on legal frameworks are included.

THE VALUE ADDED FOR FOUNDATIONS

In 1904, philanthropist Joseph Rowntree stressed, when writing to the trustees of his foundation, of the, "need to seek to search out the underlying causes of weakness or evil rather than remedying their more superficial manifestations." He added, "It was necessary to ascertain once and for all the actual facts as to intemperance, its causes – legislative and social – and when these were understood, the remedies that must be applied."

This forward-thinking statement, over a century old, acknowledges that public policy has to be influenced through the right channels in order to reach the desired goal of well-being for the community. Today many European foundations think along similar lines. "The use of advocacy to inform public policy or systems change is an important grantmaking strategy for foundations dedicated to achieving sustainable social change," remarks one interviewee. Another notes that, "if you want to substantially influence societies and trigger change within a certain context, then of course, you need to address public policy."

CASE STUDY

Building evidence and relationships

A foundation originally funding science projects broadened its ambitions towards promoting environmental sustainability and environmental concerns and gave a grant to an organisation that works to help prevent the depletion of maritime resources in the Baltic area. The grant was directed at co-financing the collection of evidence in the Baltic Sea area on the level of depletion that has taken place and the degradation of the ecosystems there. The foundation and particularly its grantee uses that evidence in their country and in other states bordering the Baltic Sea as the basis of their advocacy towards government and organisations involved in environmental management of the Baltic area. Increasingly active on this advocacy agenda, they have been able to establish very close relations not only with other green organisations, but also with authorities.

The praxis of European foundations highlights that the added value for foundations of developing advocacy is multi-fold: it makes change possible, it can broaden the scope of that change and it can make change stick. Or as one practitioner puts it: "For the foundation, the benefit of doing advocacy is certainly that you have greater impact, and I would say also greater visibility and greater leverage compared to doing only the traditional grantmaking and operational activities." Advocacy is seen then as a leveraging device on a foundation's investment: "Deciding to do advocacy is a question of ambition, a question of goals. You need advocacy if your money is not enough to reach the goal you have set. You need that leverage to reach your goals."

In addition to enhancing and sustaining a foundation's impact, advocacy has other, more cohesive qualities: "Advocacy strategies are the glue of the project, activities and discussions stick and provoke change." A similar perspective is held by a programme manager, who says: "A key added value of advocacy is pulling the strands of work together and ensuring sustainable impact." Or as a third practitioner believes: "If you engage with policies you can change something systematically and structurally."

The need for and the value that advocacy can bring are even more compelling when seen within a European public policy framework. Foundations are gradually realising that to make the system changes they wish to make, they have to start in Brussels, from where 80% of laws applicable in EU Member States somehow originate.

WHAT FOUNDATIONS BRING TO ADVOCACY

Foundations that engage directly or indirectly in advocacy, potentially bring a lot of added value to the process:

- **Substance.** "Our policy recommendations are always built from our experience of working with stakeholders on the ground", which enables the foundation to bring substance to policy makers' reflections.
- **Independent opinion.** "Foundations are independent from governments and from political parties and therefore driven by neither national nor party agendas."

"If you engage with policies you can change something systematically and structurally."

- **Independent resources.** Foundations are often also independent in terms of their resources: "Even in the current economic context, foundations can get funding together relatively quickly when there is an inspiring, strong idea."
- **Bridge-building capacities.** Foundations "can bridge the gap between different stakeholders, such as between grass-roots organisations or scientists and policy makers."
- **Impartial reality checks.** "Foundations have an intermediary role, making the link between what is happening on the ground and what is happening on the policy level; we are usually not perceived as self-interested, because we work towards a common cause."
- **Diverse networks.** Whether drawing on their boards or networks of grantees, "foundations very often have direct access to decision makers, channels that they have cultivated over years."

When reflecting on the added value, one interviewee observes that, "the combination of all these characteristics make foundations trustworthy and credible partners for political, social, economic, cultural and environmental change in public interest. Therefore, their structured advocacy strategies have good chances of success."

Tailored Strategies

When it comes to engaging in advocacy, foundations in Europe generally belong to two schools of thought: there are those that believe that advocacy is a complementary add-on to their (grantmaking) programmes, while others see it as an intrinsic part of their work. In either case, these foundations may decide to implement advocacy activities themselves, or support advocacy through their grants. Others opt for a blend between direct and indirect advocacy.

All these strategic decisions are driven and conditioned by a number of key factors and criteria. "The ways in which you go about advocacy depend on the programme, the political context, the environment, among other things. So a foundation's role and the way it goes about doing advocacy will differ depending on the nature of the issue and the social and political context." As one practitioner remarks, deciding on which capacities and assets to mobilise for a foundation's various advocacy efforts is like "picking the right horses for the right courses".

"…picking the right horses for the right courses."

Selecting the strategy and tools that suit best can depend also on whether a foundation starts with the problem or the end goal: "We work backwards and look at where we want to end up, and we work back to identify what would have to happen; who and what would have to change and what it is that is going to make them change to get what we want to achieve; who has a say in that; and finally who would have to change to get to where we want to go."

A basic criterion for choosing a certain advocacy topic is whether it is aligned with a foundation's purpose: "We only engage in advocacy when issues are related to our mission and vision and goals and objectives. That's our basic criterion." Of course then, different topics may require different approaches and a focus on one or several audiences: "Certain topics we are dealing with are clearly not interesting for the press. It also depends whether the topic is already on the political agenda or if we are agenda setting, which requires a particular strategy." Several interviewees note the importance of identifying key stakeholders right at the beginning of the strategy process and knowing, "what their influence is, how important they are, who are the enablers and what are the limits."

So far these are the factors that most foundations must explore when tailoring their advocacy strategy. But foundations sometimes have to make even more specific choices:

Poll position. Some types of foundations, such as community foundations, find that to have credibility – as private independent actors – they must ensure that the positions they take will be broad enough to win support from across the diverse stakeholder community that they represent. The case is similar for large foundations operating at a national level, which must have a pluralist take on advocacy. Other foundations start from their own specific values and experience and develop positions that try to influence the general public and decision makers to take up that position.

Tools in the box. The chosen tool with which to achieve influence varies from foundation to foundation. Some foundations feel limited to certain tools and activities due to their operating rational which is enshrined in their statutes or policies. One foundation, which provides fellowships, explains: "We sponsor individuals that have capacities and plan to change their community: How they do it depends on them." Another foundation explains they organise both public conferences and closed-door meetings with all types of decision makers in an administration to influence policy agendas. Awards are used by some foundations to draw out good practices but also to publicise issues, get media attention and influence specific policy agendas. And one foundation interviewed explain how they draw on an arsenal of tools to reach their goal: "When trying to bring about change through influencing, we have done that through funding research; we've done it through funding campaigning; we've done it through one-on-one meetings with influential people; we've done it through pilot service delivery."

Evidence for effectiveness. Having solid evidence to draw upon is increasingly important for conducting effective advocacy. While some foundations choose to make use of their own in-house expertise, many commission academic research or partner with or sponsor think tanks. One foundation executive explains how this works: "We always use a case-by-case approach, but then generally work with legal and scientific experts and translate their findings into policy maker language." Another foundation explains why they chose to combine expertise from public affairs consultancies with in-house expertise: "They [consultancies] have the insights, the connections and the know-how to maximise the likelihood of success."

Channelling voices. When communicating the results of their advocacy work, foundations are again faced with an array of options. "We always let our grantees do the talking, particularly the public talking," explains one practitioner. But foundations do not necessarily have to fund organisations for them to act as channels for communication. Another foundation works closely with (medical) patient organisations, which they consider to constitute a powerful voice in advocacy.

Some foundations prefer to use their voice to advocate: "We prefer to use the results from our grantees for our advocacy rather than letting them (the grantees) do the actual advocacy. So we do a lot of networking among grantees to understand the problems, their concerns, the lessons learned and we transfer those ideas to policy makers."

Getting connected. In Europe, advocacy is carried out at different levels, from the very local and regional to the national and European. This sometimes requires foundations to work between these various levels and such interplay is facilitated by numerous pan-European platforms in which, "national members tune into developments at the Brussels level and are encouraged to assert their national voice in the negotiation." A European platform on nature protection, which plays both watchdog and advocacy roles, helped one foundation to establish alliances with other foundations and with over 60 major conservation NGOs across Europe. Through demo projects, the platform also helped the foundation to demonstrate to the authorities there of the feasibility of implementing certain EU

CASE STUDY

Private and local going public and nationwide

One of the issues a foundation in Ireland was concerned about was the issue of bullying of gay students in schools and it decided – as part of a multi-annual core support grant to the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) – to support them in creating a guide for principals and school leaders to help gay students have a much easier school experience. The guide supports schools in tackling homophobic bullying and in providing a safe and supportive environment for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender students and encourages schools to plan ahead, since most young people are likely to come out during the school years and appreciate support at that time. It also promotes the creation of a system of reporting bullying. The guide, which enjoys the backing of all key stakeholder groups, was launched in 2011 with the support of the Department of Education and was endorsed by the whole sector.

Planning Cycles

Advocacy planning cycles vary among foundations, but they can generally be divided into a series of steps that at times may overlap, as this is not a linear process. A standard process starts as follows:

- Identify the problem that needs to be addressed
- Map out the needs and the gaps of what is currently done by other stakeholders (government, foundations, NGOs and others)
- Explore the areas where your foundation can bring added value
- Gather the necessary information and ensure that the causes and effects of the problem are understood
- Develop the theory of change and an advocacy strategy eliciting a sense of clarity on the vision, goal and objectives
- Map out allies, drivers and obstacles, as well as target audiences
- Develop key messages and choice of methods, tools and activities, coordinating with all those involved
- Develop the means for monitoring and evaluating the process
- Document risks and assumptions
- Establish time-scales and assign responsibilities

Alternatively, foundations may choose to start from a scenario or scenarios that explore the future. This scenario-setting may prompt questions like: What do the key actors expect to happen if there is no policy change? What can change the "natural" course of events? Such so-called "Future Backwards" planning not only allows you to judge whether what you currently undertake is relevant, it invariably sparks creativity and uncovers options that remain hidden in a standard problem analysis.

bird and habitat directives – little had been done to apply these directives before then.

Assumptions and theories of policy change. Making assumptions and articulating the theory of change can help clarify how an advocacy strategy and its activities aim to achieve impact. In evaluating one of its major programmes, the evaluation team of an interviewed foundation developed a model that looks at how assumptions about the behaviours of decision makers can influence an advocacy strategy on a chosen topic. The evaluators suggest that we take for granted that democratic decision making is populated with pluralist, good intentioned policy makers, who rationally weigh up the evidence that we provide them when taking decisions. This may not always be the case. Their model also suggests the need to explore other arenas and discourses, and to deliberately challenge these assumptions, for example by skilful negotiations or even litigation.

Sarah Stachowiak, a US researcher, describes six pathways that each represent different theories about how policy change happens:

- Policy change through large leaps
- Coalition building for policy change
- Looking out for windows of opportunity for policy change
- Reframing the (public) mind-set as a key ingredient for policy change
- Policy change as a result of decisions from the power elite
- Policy change as a result of movement building or grass-roots pressure

"In their advocacy work, European foundations make choices and while they seem to have preferences for certain pathways, in practice aspects of these theoretical pathways are often combined. The question is are you aware what the assumptions are behind your foundation's approach to advocacy? And are they plausible or tested?"

Gathering evidence and then disseminating it to prompt a large leap is a common strategy for foun-

dations in Europe. This type of strategy is especially useful for a large-scale policy change, when the right conditions are met such as having strong support from the media. Reflecting that different pathways are suited to different situations, one practitioner cautions that "in some cases it can be more effective to make a big splash in the media and in others, it is better to have closed discussions." Also, to effectively make large leaps, foundations are required to commit for long periods of time.

Certain approaches require considerable capacity and high levels of flexibility. One foundation practitioner explains that in their organisation they meticulously and continuously monitor the landscape for windows of opportunity for policy change in certain areas: "You have to avoid arriving too late, because it can also happen that things go so fast and when your nice project process is done, the window of opportunity is closed." One consortium of foundations active in promoting the rights of disabilities combines the model of working through coalitions with seeking windows of opportunities for policy change nationally and internationally.

A initiative of a number of UK foundations promotes in a coordinated way efforts to influence the mind sets of the general public on migration. Agenda setting does not have to involve taking a position and can also be about generating debate, as some foundations have been known to fund quite opposing voices, thus triggering a debate. A practitioner warns that after carrying out a campaign, a foundation may need to be ready to quickly change course: "We successfully put a stop to a government practice, but we did not have an alternative teased out. Of course in the end that is the role of a government, but as advocates you are exposed to the criticism of not being constructive."

In one of their programmes, a Belgian foundation typically engages stakeholders, "who are both capable of exerting heavy (political) influence on the issue dealt with by the project and extremely interested in the issue," which suggests the importance of the role of power in their theory of policy change. One foundation interviewee explains how they declined a proposal to research human rights violations because they felt that unless those who had the power to change things – i.e. the government – were deeply involved side-by-side with the human rights lawyers, nothing would change.

An Irish-based foundation actively engages with "client groups" in the aging sector in Northern Ireland, building skills and connecting them to other actors. A London-based trust invests in campaigning against slavery and trafficking but also into service delivery for sex workers who want to exit prostitution.

It is an on-going academic debate as to which theory is most probable. Foundations can be and are in fact more pragmatic. But at the same time, foundations have to ask themselves: What are the

CASE STUDY

From local initiative to national policy

In one of the most industrialised regions of Germany, a foundation decided to focus on introducing German as a second language in teacher training to provide teachers in every subject with the ability to teach German, so that migrant children could actually follow school and their results wouldn't be jeopardised by the fact that they didn't understand the teacher. The foundation started advocating for this on a local level. They were so successful that soon the local government introduced this as a policy and contributed financially. This partnership then carried the case through the system and is well on the way to becoming a national policy.

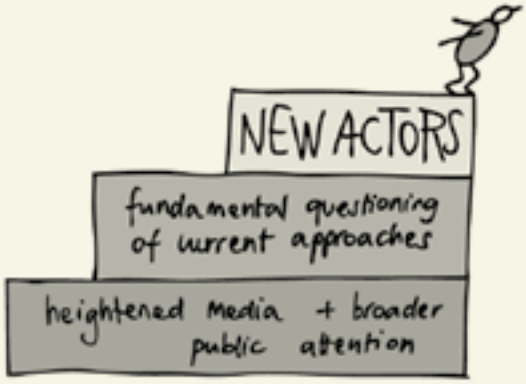
CASE STUDY

Campaigning against legislation that threatens to erode human rights

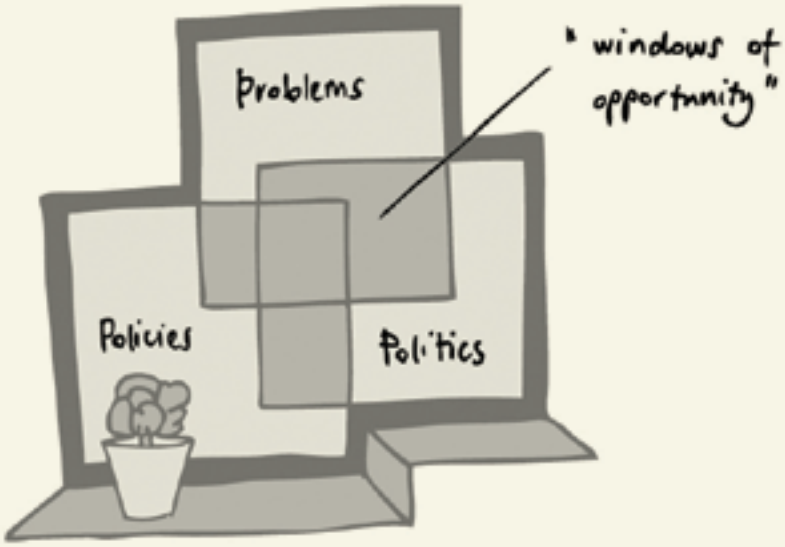
In the United Kingdom, under the Blair administration, the government wanted to introduce 48 days of detention without charge for terror suspects, while it currently stands at 72 hours. This was after the London bombings, and it would substantially erode some very fundamental guarantees for individuals. A foundation set out to fund public advertisement, lobbying of parliamentarians and public campaigns, and through this effort the bill was defeated, despite the fact that initially the government had the required numbers in the House.

Six Pathways to Policy Change

"LARGE LEAPS" THEORY

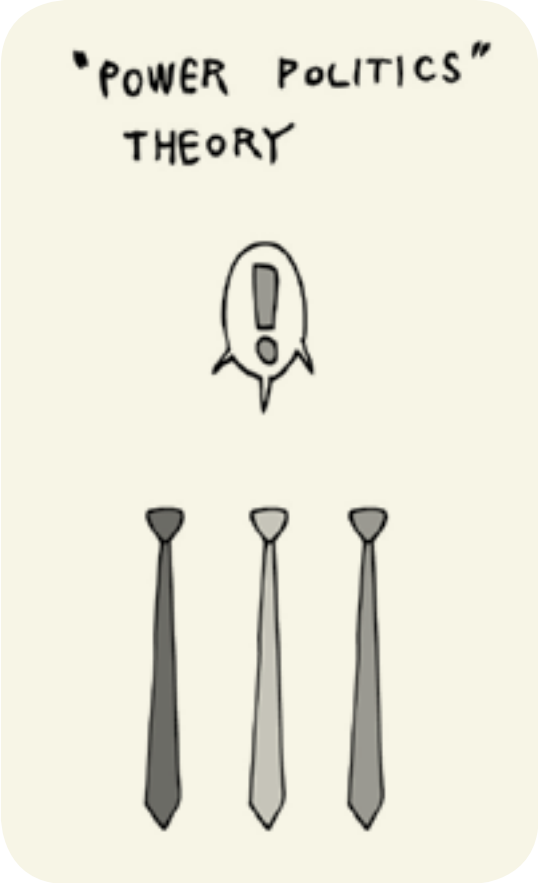


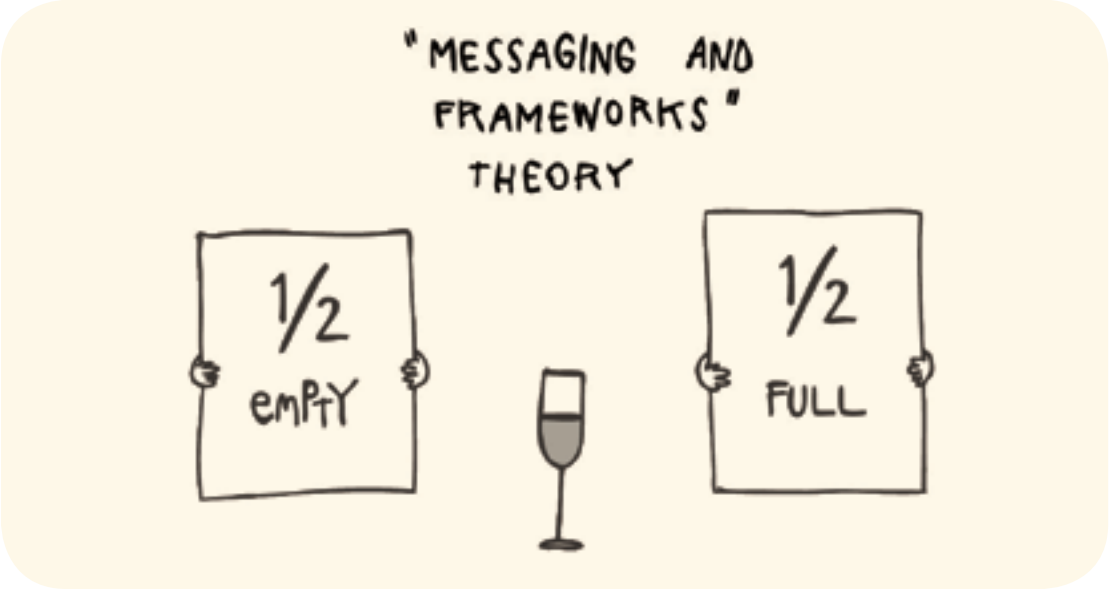
"POLICY WINDOWS" THEORY



"COALITION" THEORY


"GRASSROOTS"
THEORY
GRASS
ROOTS


"POWER POLITICS"
THEORY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CASE STUDY

Evidence Influences European Regulatory Process

The European Physical Agents Directives are a series of official directives relating to the health and safety of workers. There is one about noise and vibration, another about exposure to light, and a third one about electromagnetic fields. A foundation was concerned about the latter's potential effects on research. "No one picked up on the relevance to medical research when the Directive was first passed, and then it suddenly dawned on people that this would also affect MRI scanners, both used at the clinic, and particularly their use for research." The Directive prohibited workers to stand near the MRI scanner while it was on. The foundation worked in partnership with numerous other organisations in doing a survey of all researchers who used MRI in their country. They worked together with two major research organisations to understand how it could actually affect researchers, how much they needed to stand near scanners, the difference of different field scanners, what they were using the machines for, etc. "This survey ended up being published in the Journal of Magnetic Resonance Imaging. I never thought this could happen, but it was a really useful piece of research to feed into the discussions and so further down the line, it helped", says a Senior Policy Adviser who worked on this project. As a result of this joint effort, the transposition of the Directive is delayed.

assumptions that are embedded in our programmes and approach? What is the theory of policy change that underlies them? Or do we do what we do simply because it is our standard practice?

And – a no less important question – does our theory fit with what your foundation and our grantees can do, based on their competences? Ultimately, as an experienced advocate notes, "advocacy strategies cannot be effective if it is not absolutely clear what you want to achieve and how you believe your actions will foster that change."

Negotiating the European maze. The level of understanding and experience of doing advocacy at the European level varies among foundations. For some, it requires enlisting help. One foundation says that it has, "struggled with an intervention at the European level, but the way we have gone about it is solely through the collaboration with other foundations." A foundation practitioner with extensive experience of the EU reassures his peers: "The decision-making processes at European level are certainly complex, but they are also highly formatted. They are in a certain way more predictable and more mechanical [than at national levels]."

Through advocating at the European level, foundations can target a wide range of regulatory and policy frameworks, from wildlife and the environment, research and education to culture, health, and food and safety. Some of these programmes have significant financial incentive measures that shape national policies and from which foundations or their programme partners and grantees can benefit. So knowing your way around in Brussels in that sense can also provide foundations with the financial means to leverage the impact of their own organisation and other foundations, as well as the organisations they sponsor.

Engaging with the EU Institutions. Brussels hosts numerous European Institutions, towards which foundations can target their advocacy strategies. Although the approach is often case-by-case, most agree that strategies should focus on the European Parliament, since it has the potential to release funds to support certain causes, and it is where foundations can raise awareness of an issue or influence legislative change. This means targeting committee rapporteurs and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). Of course legislative change also means establishing good relationships with national parliamentarians, the European Commission and individual Directorates-General (policy departments) of the Commission. As one interviewee shares, this engagement takes time but is worthwhile in the end: "There used to be more resistance to advocacy in the different Directorates-General in the Commission, so we had to build these bridges with the European Commission to gain credibility."

Strength in numbers. To gain access to these institutions often means coming together with like-minded actors: "Rather than the EU dealing individually with all these different players, consortia are already coordinated between themselves. They

[European Institutions] appreciate that they have a strong actor with which they can engage, with one voice and one face." When working at EU level, one practitioner notes the importance of showing "that your proposals count on the support and reflect the general interest or the thinking of the relevant European-wide organisations".

Convening. To achieve the aforementioned strong voice based on stakeholder consensus and evidence involves a certain amount of convening. The power of convening was experienced by one foundation, which organised small reflection groups in different locations involving representatives from the academic, cultural and diplomatic sectors, to discuss specific cultural issues around EU enlargement: "Then a report was produced including very concrete recommendations each time for the European Institutions and Member States on how to accompany the EU enlargements in cultural terms." When the series of reflection groups and reports were concluded, the result of the two years of work was presented to the EU presidency, which was at that point held by The Netherlands: "We held a big conference in The Hague with the ministers of EU Member States discussing enlargement." The same approach was used when this foundation felt that "there was little sensitivity to cultural concerns in the European External Action Service (EEAS) neither in its strategies, nor in its policies and programmes. So we launched a consortium between national cultural institutes and foundations. This generated public feedback about the role of culture in external relations, media partnerships, applied research; and all that body of work influenced the EEAS when it designed strategies for external relations."

"The decision-making processes at European level are certainly complex, but they are also highly formatted."

CASE STUDY

In Advocacy Things Can Get Rough

An environmental NGO was concerned about the use of formaldehyde in two factories owned by a foreign company. The substance is used in the wood industry, but because of its health and environmental implications, it is now banned in the European Union. A foundation backed up the efforts of the NGO to advocate agains this company demanding the company and the government comply. They went to public hearings, public consultations and asked the company to stop using this chemical and find and environmentally friendly alternative or at least something that is neutral towards health and the environment. Because they got no results, the NGO sued the company and they also informed the EU about the case. The EU requested the state to intervene and oblige the company to stop using this chemical. The state failed to react and thus an official European infringement procedure has started based on the NGO's letters. The company reacted by writing a complaint letter to all the funders of this NGO and ask the funders if they were satisfied with the way this NGO was spending their money. The reaction of the funders was: "Our money went to a good cause." As a result, there were several lawsuits that ended with huge fines for the company and even with the stop of the activity of the respective factories.

Brussels Essentials

Foundations increasingly engage in advocacy at European level, even when their focus is national. To find your way around, you need to manage some Brussels essentials.

In Brussels, advocacy — understood as an attempt to influence decisions taken by the EU Institutions — is considered an integral and accepted part of the democratic process. With comparatively fewer civil servants than national and regional authorities, the European Institutions rely systematically on drawing upon information and "evidence" from a broad-based constituency of stakeholders. In relative terms, Brussels has not only the highest number of diplomats in the world, but also an extensive stakeholder community in the field of advocacy, from political and business groups, trade unions and associations, to citizen groups, NGOs, foundations, think tanks and consultancies – all vying for attention. To maintain a voice and wield some influence in this crowded environment, it is imperative to design a well-structured advocacy strategy. Pragmatism is key to good EU-level advocacy: "We come with very concrete proposals on what these institutions could do, so that helps inform their strategies."

It is crucial to understand the roles, responsibilities and dynamics within the EU labyrinth-like decision-making processes and circles of influence in order to effectively promote certain issues through advocacy. As in other spheres, advocating for policy change requires understanding the gaps in the area of concern and the potential for change; those who need to be targeted in the messaging; and the most effective timeline.

There are critical moments in the policy and legislative process, such as the drafting of policy papers, budgets, work programmes, annual reviews, and the holding of expert working groups. So it is important to know when solid recommendations embedded in an advocacy campaign can be most effective. To influence a legislative process it is always good practice to advocate at the very initial stage of drafting and design. Yet it is also important to carry out advocacy in the implementation stage. Beyond specific timings, it is also essential to develop close relationships with key stakeholders prior to these moments, as credibility and trust is built over time.

SOME KEY EU INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES

The European Commission (aka The Commission)

Its main task is to promote the European general interest. The Commission is an executive body, which coordinates and manages policies and projects, as well as the EU budget. Most legislative proposals are initiated by the Commission and in compliance with its role as "Guardian of the Treaty". The Commission also has also a key role at the implementation stage, ensuring the application of the Treaties and EU law.

The Commission uses a variety of tools for external consultations, which can be opportune moments for advocacy, such as when preparing the Commission work programme, impact assessments, open hearings, e-consultations, green and white papers, expert and stakeholder groups and informal meetings. Starting to make your views known at the level of the design of the proposal is the best way to ensure that they will be taken into account, although you need to monitor that they do not disappear in the ensuing decision-making process.

The Council of the European Union (aka the Council)

The Council of the European Union is also referred to as the Council of Ministers. For reasons relating to the organisation of its work, the Council meets – according to the policy subject under discussion – in 10 different "configurations", which are attended by Ministers of the Member States and the European Commissioners responsible for the areas concerned. So in reality there are several councils: Environment, Employment Social Policy and

Consumer Affairs (EPSCO), Justice and Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs Council, to name but a few. Governments tend to defend their own interests in the Council. Meetings are prepared at a technical level by "working parties" involving civil servants culminating in decision-making by Permanent Representatives and the Council itself.

The Council should not be confused with the European Council. The European Council brings together national and EU-level leaders to set the overall political and economic direction, as well as the EU priorities and guidelines.

The European Parliament (aka The Parliament)

The current 754 elected Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) represent the European citizens in the European Parliament. The Parliament has three main roles:

- Debating and passing European laws with the Council
- Scrutinising other EU Institutions, particularly the Commission, to make sure they are working democratically
- Debating and adopting the EU's budget with the Council

MEPs meet in plenary sessions in Strasbourg, but the bulk of the work is done in Brussels. The parliamentary work is organised by thematic policy committees and structured by political groups. MEPs are accountable to their electorate and thus particularly interested in contacts with organisations from their constituency. MEPs also have specific areas of interest. Informal cross-party groupings, called parliamentary intergroups provide a space for MEPs to discuss these shared interests including ageing, youth, environmental issues, disability and social economy, among others.

The European External Action Service (EEAS)

The EEAS is an autonomous body, which was created by the Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force on 1 December 2009. This structured a Foreign Affairs and Security Policy supported both by a diplomatic service in Brussels and 140 EU delegations and offices around the world. The aim was to strengthen the EU in its role as a global player and to create a bridge between the Council of the EU and the European Commission.

Others

Other key institutions and bodies include: the Court of Justice of the European Union, the Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, The European Central Bank and numerous EU agencies.

COMPETENCES OR WHO DOES WHAT?

The Treaty of Lisbon has clarified the division of competences between the European Union (EU) and Member States. Basically it introduces a classification for the first time of who does what, distinguishing between three main types of competence:

- **Exclusive competences of the EU.** In the areas of exclusive competence, only the Union may legislate and adopt legally binding acts. These areas are: competition rules for the functioning of the Internal Market, Customs Union, Common Commercial Policy, the Euro (monetary policy), conservation of marine biological resources in the Common Fisheries Policy
- **Shared competences between the EU and Member States.** These are areas in which the EU and Members States are authorised to adopt binding acts. They range from the environment, some aspects of social policy, economic, social and territorial cohesion, to consumer protection and the area of freedom, security and justice
- **Supporting competences.** In these areas the EU can only intervene to support, coordinate or complement the action of Member States. Consequently, it has no legislative power in these fields and may not "interfere" as such in the exercise of these competences, which are reserved for Member States. Areas covered include culture, education, youth, the protection and improvement of human health, and tourism

The current division of competences between the EU and Member States is not set in stone. However, the review of these competences (reducing or

extending them) requires the consent of all Member States and necessitates a revision of the Treaties, which is a very heavy process.

In addition, the exercise of Union competences is subject to three fundamental principles which can often be found in EU texts and jargon:

- The Union has only the competences conferred upon it by the Treaties (conferral)
- The exercise of EU competences may not exceed what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties (proportionality)
- For shared competences, the EU may intervene only if it is capable of acting more effectively than the Member States (subsidiarity)

EU DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES: WHO DECIDES?

The European Commission is the EU institution which has a quasi-exclusive right of initiative to propose legislation in those policy areas where it has the competence to do so. In addition, with the European Citizens' Initiative introduced in April 2012, EU citizens have the opportunity to directly request the Commission to bring forward a legislative initiative subject to the following: the proposal must be backed by more than one million European citizens from at least seven Member States and must be in an area of competence of the EU.

The vast majority of the legislative proposals made by the Commission becomes law. The EU's standard (legislative) decision-making procedure is known as "co-decision" (since the Lisbon Treaty, the formal term is 'Ordinary Legislative Procedure'). This means that the directly elected European Parliament has to approve EU legislation together with the Council (the governments of the EU Member States). The Commission drafts the legislation proposal and sends it to the legislators, i.e. the European Parliament and the Council, as well as National Parliaments and where applicable, to the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. For the role of National Parliaments in this process, see article 12 TEU and Protocol 1. The Council and Parliament co-decide in up to three readings. However, there can be variations in procedures linked to policy areas, where the Parliament may be asked to give its consent, without being able to amend the proposed legislation (consent procedure). In other variations the Parliament will only be consulted without having the final word. There are also variations in the type of majority required at the level of the Council to adopt a proposal, including unanimity voting procedure, which will shape advocacy strategy at this level. Once the legislation is adopted, it still needs to be implemented; it is part of the Commission's responsibilities to oversee implementation.

ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY

European citizens have legitimately demanded greater transparency in policy-making. There is a trend to respond to this expectation, such as by making the interaction between EU Institutions and NGOs, foundations, think tanks and businesses more transparent. Creating the Transparency Register for interest groups, the related Code of Conduct, as well as the Register of Expert Groups advising EU Institutions are tools intended to enhance this transparency. The transparency register is a joint Parliament and Commission register. The registration is voluntary but as a "serious" organisation you are expected to enlist. Those that have registered in the Transparency Register are also required to sign up to the related Code of Conduct.

Moreover, the new framework brought about by the Lisbon Treaty article 11 on participatory democracy sets out a duty for the Commission to consult concerned parties, and for the institutions to conduct an open and regular dialogue with representative associations from civil society. This is in some cases still in the making.

EU rules on access to documents are also intended to increase transparency, although in practice, access can remain complex and uncertain.

Learning by Doing

There is no silver bullet when it comes to doing advocacy. Nonetheless foundations can always benefit from lessons learned from previous efforts, building upon these and the experiences of other foundations in Europe. Asked what lessons they would share from practising advocacy, interviewees conveyed what they had learned, in some case the hard way:

Timing and time frames:

- "Long-term strategies are needed including clarity on the foundation's specific role in that strategy."
- "You have to arrive early in the process."
- "It is important to build momentum at the right time and therefore to identify key milestones in planning."

Audiences, influencers and decision makers:

- "Adopt a multi-targeted approach."
- "Engage with people who have the power to make required changes."
- "Target both political and technical actors."
- "You have to target decision makers."

Approaching these audiences:

- "Messages need to be communicated taking into account the desired impact a foundation wants to produce among the targeted audience. It is of great importance to understand what language style and format communicates best to that specific audience, as this differs if they are a decision maker, policy maker, parliamentarian, and opinion leader."
- "The most effective way to communicate is to understand the type of language (terms, jargon, style and format) and the needs of the audience you are talking to, understand what drives them and adapt the way you present your key messages accordingly."
- "Documents must be short and in targeted policy language to serve as tools for advocacy."
- "Media outreach is important."
- "Improve your data to make your case more clearly."
- "A solid communication department is needed within the foundation."
- "Ensure that you manage to achieve buy-in."

Partnering:

- "Select the best partners to work with and engage with other stakeholders."
- "Work with other organisations to have a pan-European message to gather more strength."
- "Motivate the coalition by acknowledging success but also make it clear that (they should be) in for the long term."
- "Count on having to provide capacity building on advocacy both internally for your own staff and for grantees."

Risk and reputations:

- "Do not be too risk averse."
- "Avoid conflicts of interests."

Collaboration and connectedness. A key lesson is that different players uniting for a common cause and forming alliances, partnerships or funding consortia can have significant advocacy outcomes. "I know partnerships can sometimes take longer but advocacy in partnership carries more weight,"

remarks one practitioner. Collaboration also interlinks expertise and networks, which allows for different perspectives as well as greater visibility. For example, nine foundations in Germany adopted the "one voice, one face" approach when they sought to influence national public policy makers towards a more pro-European stance.

In addition to generating a stronger voice, foundations also network to gain further legitimacy. "Partnerships should be chosen in relation to strategic goals", notes one practitioner whose foundation partners with medical research centres, charities and foundations in different European countries on certain projects. If not in direct partnership, foundations see the importance of staying connected with engaged groups such as that of legitimate stakeholder groups (i.e. youth, elderly, disabled or with a specific health issue): "I think that independent foundations and NGOs can be an important factor influencing policies and systems, but you have to have a really very close connection to the actors and stakeholders on the ground and listen to them because if you are not well informed, you can easily do damage." Alliances with national or European dimensions enable foundations with a local footprint to better understand the bigger picture and ensure that their voices are heard in other spheres.

Informed by evidence. Several foundations emphasise the importance of grounding advocacy strategies in solid research in order to cogently convey an idea or a position. Evidence, however, only has value in advocacy if it is being communicated by credible spokespeople in an accessible format, which is why one foundation emphasises the importance of developing links with academia and interest groups. These same groups the practitioner emphasises, "are not only potential users but should be able to influence the research agendas generating evidence."

Sometimes an advocacy goal is to raise awareness, raise interest and foster a favourable climate for an open debate. In these cases, contradicting evidence can be used to illustrate different positions, allowing for false arguments to be debunked. That said, evaluators increasingly warn that what we label evidence may be overrated, and a policy debate may linger some time on the mere quality of the evidence.

Developing in-house and grantee capacity. Several foundations highlight the importance of in-house capacity for effective advocacy, both with regards to understanding the issues at hand and skills needed to communicate these and the foundation's position, as one manager emphasized: "You have to ensure that you have the right internal resources i.e. that you have good staff who are credible actors in their specific field." Some foundations make a clear division of labour between those staff working on the grant-making and programming and those on advocacy. Other foundations look for programme managers that have "both project management skills in handling priorities as well as political intelligence and communication skills." Having a supportive and well-informed board is also key: "We also benefited from the board members who really understood the importance of influencing policy as a foundation; they were very much politically engaged and politically visionary."

Sustained commitment. To draw on the knowledge of NGOs and other partners, foundations must be prepared to invest over a longer period time in the infrastructure and, consequently, the sustainability of these actors: "You really have to decide how far you are ready to go, and then make the resources available and be realistic. If you want to do a campaign properly, then you need ample resources. Someone running a campaign on a part-time basis is not possible." A grantee also kindly reminds funders that, "it costs a lot of time to involve and inform people about an issue, to do the necessary research, to think about, create and operate activities, contacts with press. So please keep project application and evaluation forms readable and logical to fill in."

For one practitioner: "Credibility comes from the knowledge that these policy recommendations don't come out of the blue, but that they are the result of a long-term engagement with stakeholders on the ground." But sometimes the length of the engagement depends on uncontrollable factors with uncontrollable consequences: "Governments change, priorities change, economic circumstances

change, so you are never sure of the end results. At the same time, it can also happen that things go extremely fast."

While these factors may seem unpredictable, "choosing the right timing for action is crucial" and foundations should be ready to take advantage of "key windows of opportunity". An interviewee stressed the importance of engaging early in a legislative process, by for instance commenting on white papers to ensure the legislation is right.

Tactical twists. For the majority of foundations, effective advocacy is built on finding consensus between stakeholders and the decision and policy makers on a particular issue. One practitioner notes that their collaborative approach is embedded in the belief that it can generate greater sustainable change: "I'm interested in sustainability and it's more sustainable if you work with the governments together in this process of monitoring human rights violation."

Thinking collaboratively with decision makers and building relations of trust is therefore essential to advocacy, but it does not rule out tactical dissent and disagreements. A foundation active in public litigation and confrontational advocacy says, "For some issues you are going to have to show the State that these things are not acceptable."

Taking a strong stance is necessary, especially when faced with strong and heavily-resourced private sector opposition, as one practitioner explains: "The other side have no qualms about identifying what their issue is and absolutely ploughing money into any kind of sideways attempt to attain their objective. Arms manufacturers and so on have no qualms about that. And we sit and say no we're neutral, but the train will leave the station."

Risk taking and risk management. Advocacy goes hand in hand with risk taking, as one practitioner affirms: "Our board clearly accepts that we would need to lift our heads above the parapet, so to speak, with the risk of getting something nasty in our faces." Another remarks: "You have to be prepared for negative feedback. The more impact you have, the more enemies you have."

CASE STUDY

Bringing together different pieces of an advocacy puzzle

A foundation was concerned by the state of human rights in Azerbaijan, so they pulled together 12 partner organisations on an international level for the Eurovision Song Contest, and also partnered with a coalition of NGOs in Azerbaijan. They supported several think tanks to document and report on the situation and sponsored briefings for journalists in Baku and other European capitals, round-table discussions with Parliamentarians in Brussels, London and Berlin, meetings with Council of Europe officials, and a photo exhibition in Strasbourg about the demolition of homes in Baku. They also funded the NGO coalition to get its message out and gave a grant to a film maker to make a film about Azerbaijan. Their goal was to look at the overall desired impact and the different ways of how they could achieve that and then to mount a very concentrated effort by a lot of different organisations in the same direction. "We were a bit like glue, the coordinating force behind the overall campaign while not actually leading the campaign ourselves."

But good planning and preparation can reduce risks: "Taking risks are necessary in the field of public policy change, but it is better to ensure that you are well informed. If needed, consult with legal experts and always prepare your arguments well." Some boards do risk management and contingency planning, which as one practitioner explains, "would be very much based on the way we work in general, which is why we are very careful when choosing partners or grant recipients." This process involves checking that, "they are serious, that they are on top of their agenda, that they have the internal resources in terms of knowledge and organisation that makes it potentially worthwhile for us to invest in them."

Other foundations prepare by strengthening their public relations capacity: "When we moved into this new area of grantmaking, we realised there is a risk of getting embroiled in political issues. So we hired a public affairs staff member to keep a sharp eye on this." Instead of avoiding adversity and risks, one interviewee considers that it is more constructive to facilitate a solid debate, such as in the example of the "faith meets science" discus-

sion. It is important to "respond to the adversarial arguments, counter critics with positive stories and ensure that beneficiaries' voices are heard."

Monitoring and evaluation. An (advocacy) action plan and an explicit underlying theory of change are the essential ingredients for monitoring and evaluation. They allow you to formulate indicators, both qualitative and quantitative. For example, in Northern Ireland, advocacy led by one foundation on issues regarding the situation of the elderly initially resulted in an increase in questions asked in the Assembly, a quantitative change that later subsided. On close inspection, qualitative analysis of what was going on revealed that while fewer in number, these questions were considerably more relevant and influential.

"Evaluating the effectiveness of advocacy grantmaking depends, first of all, on articulating what you intend to accomplish, how each activity relates to a desired outcome, and how long each of those outcomes is expected to take – a few months, a few years, or longer." But all practitioners agree that tracking progress is more easily said than done. Much more than service delivery, advocacy has quite intangible outcomes, not to mention impact that can't be attributed to the actions of just one foundation or consortium.

Not everyone has the sizeable budget needed for extensive evaluation; so foundations can hone in on outcomes of one specific approach. For instance, in the case of using research, foundations should ask themselves: Is the research being used and does it make a case adequately to be taken up by independent media? If foundations want to influence the agenda or how the public frames an issue, then it is important to track what is said about it in the media, and through quick polls or larger campaigns. If the focus is on compliance with legislation, foundations can evaluate their impact by asking a number of questions: Did the investment in monitoring the policy environment to identify windows of opportunity lead to any action? What were the results? What were the effects of this advocacy on targeted audiences? Were any of the recommendations adopted in legislative or policy changes?

Challenges and trends looking ahead. "Funding advocacy and advocates is the most direct route to supporting enduring social change. If one of philanthropy's objectives is to create social change, then isn't it time for us to start investing serious resources in advocacy?" Little by little it would appear that foundations across Europe are stepping up their advocacy and heeding this compelling call to action made by one of the foundations interviewed for this guide. This is certainly the case in the UK, as one practitioner observes, "I'd like to believe, and on my good days I do believe that foundations in the UK are becoming a teeny weeny bit more willing to engage in advocacy." Another practitioner concurs: "The foundations we work with are becoming much more sophisticated about communications and advocacy work, and (they) have a strategy, an end point and various indicators on how they'll get there." A European veteran in advocacy sees a shift and notes a higher engagement in advocacy from foundations from the Mediterranean but sees that civil society organisations and NGOs in Eastern Europe lag in advocacy skills and capacities.

With foundations in Europe both funding and doing more advocacy there seems to be a trend to develop further in-house capacities and addressing the lack of linkage between national and European policy contexts. Further challenges include building and sustaining coalitions, but foundations are increasingly weighing up the strategic costs involved in this.

The biggest challenge is probably that of better monitoring and evaluating qualitative impact in order to learn and be more effective; increasingly, published evaluations on advocacy experiences are beginning to emerge and are providing invaluable learning resources for all.

Foundations in Europe have the credibility, the financial means for long-term engagement – even in times of economic crisis – as well as the necessary links to a variety of experts, grass-roots actors and policy makers. The trend is upwards and the sector looks set to develop further its advocacy for the public good.

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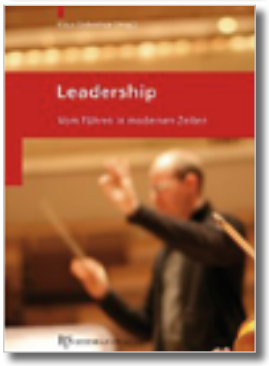

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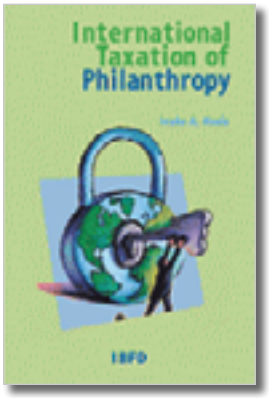

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Information on taxation and advocacy in England and Wales on the Charity Commission website http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Publications/cc9.aspx.

Information and training resources are available on US regulation regarding lobby and advocacy at www.learnfoundationlaw.org which provides a one-hour online course that covers the basic legal rules around what a private US foundation and its staff are allowed to fund and engage in.

SOME GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN ADVOCACY INITIATIVES, GUIDES AND TOOLKITS:

The Advocacy Initiative http://www.advocacyinitiative.ie is a three-year community and voluntary sector project that promotes understanding, awareness and effectiveness of social justice advocacy in Ireland. By creating the conditions for stronger social justice advocacy, the Initiative wants to strengthen policy responses to existing and emerging challenges in addressing poverty and social exclusion, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society.

The toolkit developed by the global CSO effectiveness initiative to support organisations to advocate for a more enabling environment for civil society (2011) includes examples of indicators, formats for outcome journals and processes for power mapping, among many other helpful resources http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/Toolkits

A UK website with all kinds of resources related to campaigning: http://www.campaignstrategy.org

The INTRAC international advocacy and campaigning toolkit (2007) outlines a complete course for beginners: http://www.intrac.org/resources.php?action=resource&id=629

Open Society Foundations, An introductory guide to successful advocacy, 2010. http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/evidence-messages-change-introductory-guide-successful-advocacy

The original GrantCraft guide on Advocacy http://www.grantcraft.org

The original Grantcraft guide adapted and translated in German: http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/cps/rde/xbcr/SID-50525548-AB459950/bst/Markt-der-Meinungen_Report.pdf

ON ADVOCACY AND THE EU

Alan Hardacre, **How the EU institutions work and how to work with the EU Institutions**, 2011.

An EU website with information on the EU Institutions http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/index_en.htm

Information on the **EU Transparency Register** http://europa.eu/transparency-register/index_en.htm and the **Code of Conduct** that organisations registered have to observe http://europa.eu/transparency-register/about-register/code-of-conduct/index_en.htm

Ask the EU. Did you know that you may ask the EU Institutions all kinds of internal documents and they have a legal obligation to answer you? Details at http://www.asktheeu.org/en/help/about

Contributors

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ABOUT THE FOUNDATION CENTER

FOUNDATION CENTER

Established in 1956, the Foundation Center is the leading source of information about philanthropy worldwide. Through data, analysis, and training, it connects people who want to change the world to the resources they need to succeed. The Center maintains the most comprehensive database on U.S. and, increasingly, global funders and their grants – a robust, accessible knowledge bank for the sector. It also operates research, education, and training programs designed to advance knowledge of philanthropy at every level.

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN FOUNDATION CENTRE

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The European Foundation Centre, founded in 1989, is an international membership association representing public-benefit foundations and corporate funders active in philanthropy in Europe, and beyond. The Centre develops and pursues activities in line with its four key objectives: creating an enabling legal and fiscal environment; documenting the foundation landscape; building the capacity of foundation professionals; and promoting collaboration, both among foundations and between foundations and other actors.

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