

# **MORE THAN GRANTS: HOW FUNDERS CAN USE THEIR INFLUENCE FOR GOOD**

---

Oliver Carrington, Angela Kail, Rachel Wharton, Brian Lamb  
December 2017

**LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION**  
England & Wales



# CONTENTS

Executive summary .....	3
Introduction .....	5
Research findings and best practice principles .....	6
Research findings .....	6
Principles of best practice .....	7
Typology of approaches to funding influencing .....	9
Supporting grantees in influencing and advocacy work .....	9
Encouraging grantees to campaign.....	12
Campaigning as a funder .....	13
Influencing other funders.....	16
Key considerations for funding influencing.....	18
Measurement and evaluation .....	20
Funder measurement .....	20
Measuring Influencing .....	21
Conclusions and recommendations.....	23
Recommendations .....	23
References.....	24

## Acknowledgements

NPC's guidance in helping funders approach influencing, draws on the experience of our clients and others who have shared their insights with us through our research for Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales. We would like to thank Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales and all those who have contributed to this research, especially interviewees: Michael Larcy, Director, Policy Reform & Advocacy at Annie E. Casey Foundation, Courtney Brown, Vice President of Strategic Impact at Lumina Foundation, Claudia Samcam, Development Coordinator for Institutional Donors at Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres, Tinne Vandensande, Senior Programme Coordinator at King Baudouin Foundation, Mary Sutton, Country Director at The Atlantic Philanthropies and Jake Benford, Senior Project Manager, Future of Civil Society at Bertelsmann Stiftung.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the funding situation tightens, trusts and foundations are increasingly examining how well their methods for achieving change are working. More and more funders are asking themselves whether going beyond providing funding for direct services might have more impact in the longer-term. Two common ways of doing this are providing support to help organisations develop their capacity, and to use a funder's influence to advocate for change. Both ways have the potential to create lasting change. But the difficult funding environment also means that funders need to weigh their options carefully when deciding about moving money away from frontline services. Funders need to be clear on the aims of their work, and do their best to ensure it has real impact.

This is the second report in a two-part series, looking at how trusts and foundations can give more than grants to support their grantees and the causes they care about. This report focuses on the influencing practices of funders from around the world—exploring the methods that these take, the evidence for whether it works and how funders can approach impact measurement.

## Influencing

Influencing work for funders is organising actions around a specific issue to bring about changes in the policy or behaviours of institutions and groups—be it through the foundation or its grantees. Influencing involves a wide range of actions from grass roots movement building and building public awareness, to commissioning research and lobbying. More trusts and foundations have become involved in influencing work over the past twenty years, often attracted by the idea of stopping problems before they occur. But many trusts and foundations are hesitant to become involved in this work. For many, influencing work is something which they approached gradually—many do a few small pieces of work first before becoming a more prominent campaigner.

There are good practice principles in how to approach influencing work:

1. **A clear goal.** Effective campaigns require planning and a clear understanding of what the goal is.
2. **Suitable resources.** The level of skills and capacity will depend on the approach taken, but funders should consider the resources available, their reputation and positioning within the field, the organisational commitment and whether alliances are needed.
3. **Long-term commitment.** Advocacy and influencing work can take years to reach its goal, and even 'small' achievements can take a long time. Because of this, funders need to be committed for the long-haul and funding and support needs to be long-term.
4. **Flexibility.** Flexible funding and approaches allow different techniques and approaches to be used at different times—acknowledging the complex nature of influencing and advocacy.
5. **Level of control.** It is important to ask how much control you want as a funder over your approach to campaigning and how much you want to delegate to others involved in the campaign.

In our review of approaches that funders take to influencing work, we found four main types. However, it is important to realise that trusts and foundations often use a combination of these approaches:

1. **Supporting grantees in their advocacy work.** This approach is the most common one taken by foundations. Here the level of involvement is a key issue—a foundation can simply be funding campaigning work that organisations apply for, or it can be much more involved in developing its own positions and

funding organisations that can deliver against its campaigning goals. Supporting grantees to campaign has the benefit of ensuring that the advocacy work is driven from the frontline.

2. **Encouraging grantees to campaign.** Funders can encourage their grantees to campaign, and use their own resources to highlight the campaigning efforts of their grantees. This can further the work of grantees.
3. **Campaigning as a funder.** Here the funder has become more of an actor in its own right. There are many tools that funders can use—commissioning research, legal challenges, collecting evidence, or convening actors. This approach allows the funder to direct the campaign, and uses the skills and assets of the funder more.
4. **Influencing other funders.** Influencing other funders through collaboration, match funding and promoting funder advocacy can help to build a coalition around these goals. It is especially good at changing the practice of funders.

There are a few issues that funders need to consider before directing funding towards campaigning work. There are risks involved in this work—reputation risk, potentially legal risk, but also the uncertainty of whether the objectives will be met. These issues cannot be divorced from the topic on which a funder is considering campaigning—for more controversial topics all these risks will be increased. Funders also need to think about the skills and resources that they have, the costs required and how involved they want to be. This can be difficult to determine. Some campaigns last a long time, and others can succeed very quickly. One risk that is very pertinent to a funder's role is where its mandate to campaign comes from. Many foundations are concerned about the legitimacy of campaigning by an organisation that is not involved in frontline work, and therefore put steps in place to gain more knowledge from the frontline.

## Conclusion

By playing an influencing role or funding grantees to do this, trusts and foundations have an opportunity to make a different type of impact than can normally be achieved through funding services. There are also numerous ways to be involved in influencing as shown in the typology. Our research, however, does not determine which approaches are more effective as the impact created from each example we explored very much depended on how effectively it was carried out and the context that the funder operated in.

We found that many funders are engaging in this work without it being a 'strand' of work. Ad-hoc influencing and the piecemeal support of campaigning organisations provides flexibility for the funder and can be highly valued by grantees or those benefiting from the changes in policy or behaviours, but can make it more difficult to establish what support is available for charities or for campaigns to have a sustained impact.

Overall, influencing is a useful part of the grantmakers toolkit. Like organisational development, it is a powerful way to utilise a funder's accumulated expertise and understanding about what works. While these methods need to be carefully planned, when used appropriately they are opportunities to work more directly as agents of change and to create more impact.

# INTRODUCTION

Campaigning is defined by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) as *'organised actions around a specific issue, seeking to bring about changes in the policy and behaviours of institutions and/or specific public groups, (...) the mobilising of forces by organisations and individuals to influence others in order to effect an identified and desired social, economic, environmental or political change'*. This report will use the terms influencing, advocacy and campaigning in this way. In the last twenty years, this activity has become more widespread among the actions and interests of trusts and foundations, individual philanthropists and corporate funders. Funders are now seeing advocacy work to achieve their aims and bring about change. The power, knowledge and influence of funders can make them an important force in campaigning. And many funders are choosing to support their grantees with these assets alongside financial resources.

This report was commissioned by Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales. The report looks at the methods of achieving influence and social change that have been used by other funders, particularly those outside of the UK. It examines the issues that funders need to consider when deciding whether to use these methods, the advantages and disadvantages of each method and reviews the cases where funders are best placed to use these interventions.

## Methodology

This research was conducted through a literature review of both capacity building and influencing by funders, particularly looking for evidence of impact. Unfortunately, there was relatively little evaluative information about what works—especially whether one method was more likely to work than another. This research was supplemented by several interviews with funders across the world—Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Nicaragua and the United States.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in these interviews: Michael Larcy, Director, Policy Reform & Advocacy at **Annie E. Casey Foundation**, Courtney Brown, Vice President of Strategic Impact at **Lumina Foundation**, Claudia Samcam, Development Coordinator for Institutional Donors at **Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres**, Tinne Vandensande, Senior Programme Coordinator at **King Baudouin Foundation**, Mary Sutton, Country Director at **The Atlantic Philanthropies** and Jake Benford, Senior Project Manager, Future of Civil Society at **Bertelsmann Stiftung**. Special thanks to the staff and trustees at Lloyds Bank Foundation for providing guidance and challenge.

## Report structure

This report presents our research and analysis on the topic of funder influencing. We discuss our general findings and principles of good practice, before going through a typology of different methods of capacity building, including key considerations involved in using a particular method. We then discuss measurement and evaluation, looking at general best practice and then specific methods used in measuring these issues. Our last chapter draws out our conclusions and recommendations for funders that are looking to work in this way.

# RESEARCH FINDINGS AND BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

Funders looking to create long-term and sustained change are increasingly getting involved with campaigning and advocacy. Often funders see campaigning as a way to maximise impact and get better results. As influencing, campaigning and advocacy can have far reaching effects on grantees, their communities and wider society.

Influencing work is a complex area with many different aspects and approaches to consider. Sensitivities around influencing and campaigning can arise around the topic chosen, the objectives set and whether a foundation has the legitimacy to take on a campaigning role in the first place. There are also several different approaches that can be taken and picking the right one requires careful consideration depending on what it is you want to achieve. Our conversations with funders for this research highlighted that influencing and campaigning work is a journey for many funders and different funders have different philosophies on achieving change.

Measuring impact and attribution is particularly difficult in advocacy work.<sup>1</sup> It may take a long time to show any impact and years of hard work can be undone quickly by events that are out of your control. The **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** has funded research and campaigning work to improve affordable, quality healthcare coverage in the US for years. In 2010 they were celebrating the win of Obamacare as an important step in this direction, but the current political climate presents them with new obstacles to overcome.

External events can put influencing work at risk or encourage funders to increase advocacy efforts as a response. A recent survey of CEO's at large foundations in the US asked how they thought the election of President Trump has, or will, affect the way they work. 48% of respondents believed the change in presidential administration would have a negative effect on their ability to achieve their goals, whilst 24% said they anticipate a mix of positive and negative effects, and 17% said it is too soon to tell. The survey by the Center for Effective Philanthropy also found that because of the election CEO's are planning to increase their emphasis on: collaborating with other funders, advocacy and public policy work at the state and/or local level, and convening grantees—key approaches for funder influencing that this report addresses.<sup>2</sup>

## Research findings

### The philosophy of the funder

Our research found that there are many different approaches that can be used when engaging in influencing work. The approach chosen by a funder can depend as much on their philosophy as it can on its effectiveness for the situation. For example, some funders may feel uncomfortable campaigning publicly on issues. They may prefer to support grantees to campaign or may want to be very discrete with their campaigning. **The Atlantic Philanthropies** chooses to campaign through its grantees and very rarely seeks to enter the public eye about the causes it funds. Other funders decide to use their power and influence of being a funder to campaign publicly. The President and CEO of **The California Endowment** regularly speaks out on politically important health care issues and will often appear in the media. The Endowment has also funded a high-profile media campaign that features the foundation's name prominently.

### A funder journey

For many funders becoming a strong advocate or campaigner is not a decision that is implemented straight away, it is a journey. It happens over time, often through their other work such as traditional grantmaking or research.

The **Annie E. Casey Foundation** (USA) is now considered a key advocate for improving children’s outcomes across America. Yet 27 years ago they were a much more traditional grantmaker—very rarely engaging in any type of advocacy or campaigning, preferring to give grants for project delivery. The Foundation identified an evidence gap around children’s outcomes and decided to fill it themselves by collecting data on children in America. The report was so well received that it decided to continue this work. The work grew from just collecting evidence to then making recommendations based on that evidence. The Foundation developed a network of grantees to support it with this work and began taking a more active role in campaigning, using its knowledge and expertise as a base for its work. Over time, the Foundation grew into its role as an influencer—getting to know the right people, the right tools and understanding when it was the right time to push. Now campaigning and advocacy is at the heart of what the Annie E. Casey Foundation does.

## Funder legitimacy

Legitimacy to campaign can be a concern for many funders who want to become more active in advocacy. They question whether they have the right to speak on behalf of certain groups and worry about the power imbalance inherent in every grantmaker/grantee relationship. These concerns are real but choosing not to advocate because of them is likely to limit the impact you can make as a funder.

Funders should worry less about what grantees might think of their campaigning and ask them what they think. The **Packard Foundation** in the US recently did just this and found widespread support. Grantees supported the Foundation’s use of its profile and voice to speak more directly and publicly about the issues it supports.<sup>3</sup> We also found in our research that some service-delivery charities that feel unable to campaign themselves would like their funders to engage in this work on their behalf.

Funders can build up years of accumulated knowledge about a sector that could be shared with their grantees and others working in that space. The **James Irvine Foundation** (USA) used its expertise on education in California to create an entirely new organisation to help it achieve its goals—ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career.

## Principles of best practice

Our research showed that regardless of the influencing approach taken by funders, certain principles apply. Some of these build upon the overarching key considerations covered earlier and should help funders that are interested in influencing to think through the issues involved to inform their approach and achieve the best results.

## What are you trying to achieve?

Effective campaigns require planning and a clear understanding of what the goal is. A good theory of change and advocacy strategy can help with this and frameworks exist to help funders think through this.<sup>4</sup> NPC’s [Shifting the dial](#) looks at how to plan an impactful campaigning strategy using the theory of change approach to identify intermediate outcomes needed for policymakers to change policy, see Figure 1 below. The [Centre for Evaluation Innovation](#) recently published a framework to help organisations articulate theories of change for advocacy. The framework considers different audiences, offers indicators for intermediate outcomes and prompts organisations to think about collaboration.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 1: Simplified example of theory of change approach for policy change



## Organisational capacity

This involves thinking about your grantees capacity for influencing work as well as your own. The level of skills and capacity needed will depend upon the approach taken but there are some key questions that funders should ask themselves and their grantees before beginning work in this area.

- Have they/you got the resources to deliver the campaign?
- Have they/you got the reputation and positioning in the field?
- Do they/you need alliances to achieve your goal?
- Do they/you have the organisational commitment?

## Long-term commitment

Advocacy and influencing work can take years to reach its goal, and even 'small' achievements can take a long time. Because of this timeframe, funders need to be committed for the long-haul and funding and support needs to be long-term. This usually translates to grants for multi-year periods, but it can be long-term capacity building support or a commitment to campaigning directly. It might also be a commitment to sustaining an issue in the public eye or advancing the knowledge of an issue. The scale of commitment is related to and needs to be commensurate with the scale of the challenge that you are working on. The **Annie E. Casey Foundation** in the US has been working on the KIDS COUNT programme for almost 30 years and the **King Bedouin Foundation** in Belgium has been conducting research and advocating for the positive integration of Muslims into Belgian society since 2003.

## Flexibility

Alongside a long-term commitment, an influencing funder needs to be flexible, both in terms of funding and strategy. Restricting funding to one tool or methodology can limit a foundations or a grantee's ability to respond to changing context. Flexible funding allows different techniques and approaches to be used at different times—acknowledging the complex nature of influencing and advocacy. Those involved in campaigning will need to be responsive to a changing environment, which means that strategies may change, and campaign outcomes alter. Funders need to be supportive and understanding of this. Good grantee relationships are key here. Trust and understanding between funder and grantee can help a campaign continue its momentum when challenges arise.

## Level of control

It is important to ask how much control you want as a funder over your approach to campaigning. Much will depend on the funder's own theory of change. At one end of the spectrum, a funder may intend simply to increase the capacity of a community to campaign on the issues important to that community—whatever they might be. On the other end of this spectrum, some funders will have very clear objectives within a specific policy area and will be tighter on controlling both the objectives and means of achieving these. Being clear about your own theory of change in advocacy and objectives will help identify how much control you want and probably will also suggest which organisations you may find it most attractive to work with.

# TYOLOGY OF APPROACHES TO FUNDING INFLUENCING

There are two different goals within campaigning and influencing: one is policy change, through modifying or protecting policies, and the other is behaviour change concerning the change in attitudes, opinions or actions of the public or groups of people. NPC's literature review highlighted three main approaches for funders in pursuing either of these goals. These three broad approaches can be grouped in the form that the support takes:



## 1. SUPPORTING GRANTEES IN INFLUENCING WORK

Types: Grant funding for advocacy partners in broad or specific topics and capacity building  
Benefits: Broad range of topics, close to the front line  
Challenges: Dependent on grantees, can be uncoordinated



## 2. ENCOURAGING GRANTEES TO CAMPAIGN

Types: Using prizes, motivating grantees  
Benefits: Builds capacity amongst grantees, uses funder's profile to highlight grantees' work  
Challenges: Can link a funders reputation to charities work that it has little control over



## 3. CAMPAIGNING AS A FUNDER

Types: Commissioning and disseminating research, convening, litigating  
Benefits: Funder has control over the message and the means  
Challenges: Can seem further away from the front line, more reputation risk



## 4. INFLUENCING OTHER FUNDERS

Types: Match funding, collaboration, promoting funder advocacy  
Benefits: Builds pools of funders willing to engage with influencing work  
Challenges: Can be very removed from the goal of the funder

Within each of these groupings, there are further approaches and tactics that can be taken depending on the capability of the funder and the desired outcome. Often funders combine more than one of these approaches. The next chapter summarises some of the typical trade-offs for these types of approaches. This chapter explores these five approaches in more detail.

## Supporting grantees in influencing and advocacy work



This is the most common role of foundations in advocacy work, where funders support a cause through the actions of a grantee. The costs, risks and the skill requirement of foundation staff can still vary depending on the approach that is taken. The level of involvement of the foundation is the key issue in this approach. Under this heading, grant funding and portfolios can be broad or targeted on a topic, and a foundation can focus grantee capacity.

## Grant funding for advocacy partners on a broad range of topics

This funding could be unrestricted, or restricted to a certain project or role. It is designed to further the work of a grantee in their advocacy activities, which may include grassroots organising, protest action, litigation and campaigning. To see any change, funding should be long-term and flexible to evolve with grantee needs and the demands of the external environment. The social change funding of **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation** in the UK has a broad focus on a just and inclusive society, including LGBT rights, modern day slavery and legal advocacy for disadvantaged young people.

In comparison to other activities, funding for campaigning work is difficult for grantees to obtain but it can make a great impact by tackling the cause of the problem and not just the symptoms. Funders that support a range of issues may like to use advocacy work as one of the ways that they make progress against their broad aims. Supporting a broad range of topics can help develop grantmaking experience of advocacy. However, funders should bear in mind that there is a trade-off between breadth and depth. Some funders prefer to make bigger bets in the hope that this is more likely to lead to impact.

Measuring the impact of funding influencing and advocacy work can be challenging, and this can be made more difficult when funding is untargeted. Funders can be stretched by supporting too many causes—making it difficult to dedicate resources to see whether they are making an impact.

## Grant funding for advocacy partners targeted on a specific topic

In this method, funding is more targeted on a group of organisations advocating on a specific topic. For example, a funder could be interested poverty alleviation and pursue a range of different campaign goals (eg, tax relief, youth unemployment and lack of affordable housing). **Atlantic Philanthropies** funded organisations that work on a range of critical rights in South Africa, including access to health, combatting xenophobia and LGBT. The **Lumina Foundation** (USA) supports a range of organisations working in the topic of health. The **Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust** (UK) supports partners that try to address the root causes of conflict and injustice.

Funders can take more of an active role in gathering organisations around one goal, which has the potential to increase leverage, provide incentives for a sector to work together where it has found that difficult and make success more likely. This is much more active and focused with a key goal in mind, bringing a coalition of campaigning organisations together allowing the foundation to track progress and spot duplication, as well as opportunities for collaboration. However, funders need to be careful not to exclude other voices in the field or push grantees together that are not ready.

Building a group of organisations that is working on one issue helps to build the profile of the funder and can add credibility to the campaign topic. This can also be a risk if the topic is a controversial one that risks negative reactions from stakeholders. It can also help funders who want to tackle an issue through many fronts to increase the probability that there is a breakthrough. The foundation can target resources to develop understanding of the topic and possible solutions.

All grantees in *Achieving the Dream*, a programme of the **Lumina Foundation** (USA), each have a collective policy framework, but can develop more specific annual policy priorities within this. For KIDS COUNT, the **Annie E Casey Foundation** (USA) supports at least one grantee in each of the US states in order for this group of grantees to put pressure on local government on the same issue to work towards change on the national stage. **True Colours Trust** (UK) provided long-term funding of *Every Disabled Child Matters Campaign*, which resulted in some clear campaign success. **Oak Foundation** (UK) funded Crisis on the issue of housing, which led to a breakthrough in legislation.

## The Atlantic Philanthropies and the Marriage Equality Act

The Atlantic Philanthropies was set up by Chuck Feeney in 1982. By 2020 when it closes its doors, Atlantic will have invested \$8 billion globally to promote greater fairness and equity. It has a philosophy of making big bets that are designed to drive social change. This has led it to become a large funder of advocacy work across the world. In Ireland, Atlantic began making grants in 1987, focusing on the influencing work of grantees in higher education, services for children and older adults, and protecting and expanding human and civil rights for those marginalised in Irish society.

From 2004 to 2013 Atlantic supported LGBT rights (lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender) in Ireland and contributed to the positive vote in the referendum for the Marriage Equality Act in May 2015 (62% of votes casted were in favour). Atlantic made this investment in the LGBT sector as a tipping point was approaching. LGBT activists and service providers since the 1980s had created an advocacy movement and prepared the way for more far-reaching change. However, the movement was not very cohesive and was mostly staffed by volunteers without the resources required to drive it effectively.

Homosexuality was only decriminalised in Ireland in 1993 and statutory protections took a long time to trickle down to mainstream public service provision. When Atlantic started working in this area, LGBT people were under-represented within policy-making bodies, faced stigmatisation at work, in education, and in the health system. Campaigning for gay rights was a controversial topic in a country where over 80% of people identify as Catholic.

*'We look at how can you best strengthen the field, identify the best placed organisations and then bet on them, giving them the resources and raising their ambitions to help them succeed'*

Atlantic's approach was to fund the campaigning efforts of a network of grantees to improve human rights, visibility, and access to services for LGBT people. Four main organisations were the primary beneficiaries of over €10 million funding in multi-year core funding from 2004-2013 (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network, Transgender Equality Network Ireland, LGBT Diversity and Marriage Equality). The key legislative goals for the grantees were to pass same-sex partnership legislation, to move toward a referendum on same-sex civil marriage and toward laws protecting the rights of children of LGBT families, and to make progress toward gender recognition legislation.

*'We often ended up, as we did in the LGBT case, supporting organisations that were adopting very different approaches to campaigning.'*

Atlantic supported different grantee strategies that worked toward overlapping aspects of LGBT equality and visibility. The organisations saw the benefits in sharing a common goal, but took different steps to achieve these. Atlantic insisted that each of the four organisations conducted strategic planning and develop a clear theory of change, but gave grantees the freedom to plan and implement, as well as adjusting scope and tactics as necessary. The methods of these organisations included lobbying, communications and mobilisation, effective use of transformative personal narratives and assisting direct contact between LGBT constituents and their elected representatives. Atlantic's funding gave financial security to grantees and enabled them to hire and retain specialist staff, recruit volunteer advocates, and build long-term relationships and campaigns. Through Atlantic's network funding, previously fractious relationships among the community leaders had markedly improved and there was a common cause between national, regional, and local levels of the LGBT sector in Ireland.

*'As long as they did it with conviction and capability, we were prepared to back them. Funders do not need to be prescriptive about how they get to the end point, as long as they ultimately get there.'*

## Building capacity for advocacy

Helping to build capacity for advocacy amongst grantees can help them campaign on their goals and have the organisational ability to do this after the grant has finished. This support can be given in many forms including money, peer networks or consultancy help. Advocacy work can require skills, which charities may not have. This is something, which trusts, and foundations are in a good position to provide, as this capacity building work is not something that private donations or public funding is likely to be able to support to the required degree.

Targeted capacity building support in advocacy can get the charity to develop a specific issue that might not otherwise be prioritised. But, as with other capacity building support provided by a funder, it can obligate, distract and use up limited time of grantees, especially if the grantee is not ready or interested in receiving this support.

The **California Endowment** in the USA has developed a Health Exchange Academy to train grantees on advocacy, communications, and evaluation. This initiative has been found as a critical factor in helping its grantmaking strategies succeed. Partners and staff at **Annie E. Casey Foundation** deliver technical assistance in evaluation, communications and data analysis for its grantees. It also maintains and develops its national networks of grantees through its annual conference, regular webinars and by encouraging sharing of successful tactics. **Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres** in Nicaragua puts capacity building at the heart of what it does, requiring each grantee to send a staff representative to attend a workshop as a condition of its funding. **Arts Council England** provides an advocacy toolkit to help its arts charities make the case for arts investment.

## Encouraging grantees to campaign



Funders can also play an active role in encouraging grantees to campaign. This can be through enticement or by taking a more direct approach to motivating grantees to use influencing as a tool to further their aims.

## Using communications and prizes to showcase grantee work

Foundations with a public profile can add value to grantees' advocacy work by becoming a channel for their messages and causes—when they might not otherwise be able to do so to such a degree. A foundation can add credibility to the message, help a cause access mainstream support and encourage other funders to support it. A foundation can also often convene people that grantees do not have access to. Some non-campaigning grantees may have the data and experiences but not the time, resources or reach to campaign, this can be picked up by the funder instead. However, there is a risk to the funder's brand if a grantee's message is deemed to be controversial as the funder may be unable to control the campaign messages that come out.

Funders can also provide prizes to showcase exceptional work, to catch media attention and add credibility. Each year **Fritt Ord** in Norway awards *The Freedom of Expression Prize* acknowledging those engaged in activities deemed especially worthwhile in the light of the Foundation's objectives. The **Sheila McKechnie Foundation** in the UK awards the MK Recognition Awards to celebrate people who have and are creating change.

## Motivating grantees to campaign

Some funders have access to a large pool of grantees that have potential to use their positions and expertise to contribute to campaigns and advocacy in their sectors. Funders can provide funding, training and information for grantees in specific areas to begin campaigning work.

**Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres** gives grants to small, grassroots organisations across Central America. Its grantees all focus on women's empowerment, though which aspect depends entirely on the grantee. Grantees supported by the Foundation can work on anything from rights of indigenous women to access to appropriate healthcare for transgender women. The Foundation encourages its grantees to use their expertise and voice to speak out on these issues. It supports them through training and extra funding that pays for the additional costs that can arise in campaigning work, such as travel.

## Campaigning as a funder

In addition to, or instead of, funding the advocacy work of others, a foundation may participate in advocacy and campaigning directly. The difference in this in terms of methods, is in some ways, less important than the difference in terms of attitude. When funders are in the driving role in terms of campaigning, they are responsible for setting the goals of the campaign. This means that there are more questions about what gives funders a mandate to campaign. Foundations need to be comfortable about where the mandate to champion certain issues comes from, for example this could be from the board, its staff, the wishes of its grantees or the founding principles of the foundation.

### Commissioning and disseminating research

Any advocacy strategy should be grounded in a clear understanding of the issues it seeks to tackle. Commissioning research informs strategy and builds credibility of the foundation. It can also generate public awareness about why a particular course of advocacy intervention is necessary. However, commissioning good quality research requires expertise and needs to build in dissemination plans to ensure impact. There is always the possibility that the research may undermine a viewpoint that a funder already holds, particularly if it is primary research.

In response to xenophobic attacks in South Africa, the **Atlantic Philanthropies** funded a comprehensive research project to better understand the scale and scope of the violence. It provided an analysis of the conditions in which xenophobia occurs, as well as offering practical recommendations as to how it might be addressed. The **Annie E. Casey Foundation** commissions and publishes an annual essay to reflect priorities and highlight its wider campaign work—this is publicised using its grantee network throughout the country. The **Joseph Rowntree Foundation** in the UK aims to inspire social change to reduce poverty through research, policy and practice. It highlights the underlying causes of poverty and disadvantage, and identifies solutions through research and learning from experience. **Trust for London** commissioned research on the costs and longer-term impact of low wages to employers and employees, which directly led to the London Living Wage campaign.

### Collecting evidence

A method of campaigning that is rare to funders is to use their position to collect data and evidence from grantees. This aggregated information can be used in the same way as commissioned research. This is a good way to make the most of grantee data and using it to build an evidence base. Funders can analyse this to highlight trends, back-up campaigns or use a benchmark. This can be a good way for funders to root a campaign in grassroots work.

But the demand for data can be intrusive and distracting, especially if it requires new data to be collected or a new framework to be used. Funders need to ensure that the right data is collected and if grantees are being asked to collect the data they need to be properly supported to do this. Once data has been collected, attention also needs to be given to how best to share and use this data for maximum effect.

The **Annie E. Casey Foundation** supports grantees to obtain, analyse, and interpret data, publishing *the Data Book* each year with data from indicators on child well-being. The Foundation initially collected this data itself until it had built up a network of grantees with the right skills and expertise to take this on.

## The Annie E. Casey Foundation and KIDS COUNT

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has a mission to develop a brighter future for children, families and communities in the United States. It works on a wide variety of policy and service areas that affect children and families, including: health, education, economic security, child welfare, juvenile justice, and responsible neighbourhood redevelopment. It is a large Foundation that works in every state in America through its grant making and influencing work. It gives approximately \$160 million a year to a range of organisations including federal agencies, universities and charities.

Being a program officer at a foundation is rather like being an executive producer for a movie; you're not the star and you're not the person who wrote or who directed it. But what you do is you recognise talent and good ideas and invest in them. Like an executive producer, you help make deals and find funding for good ideas and people. One of the Foundation's flagship programmes is KIDS COUNT—a programme that began in 1990 and helped transform the Foundation into a very active influencer. KIDS COUNT began after the Foundation identified a gap in the data and evidence collected around outcomes for children. It commissioned a research project that aimed to collect comprehensive data about children across America—the KIDS COUNT Data Book. The Data Book contained key information on economic well-being, education, health, family and community, and allowed charities and federal agencies to easily access data that helped with their work. It received significant media attention and brought issues around children's outcomes to people's attention. Since then the Foundation has released a new Data Book every year, allowing it to track the wellbeing of children over time and across every state. It provides high-quality, unbiased information and the Foundation uses its release to encourage action on behalf of children and families. The success of the book led the Foundation to invest in the KIDS COUNT Data Centre to ensure data collection continued, was rigorous and was accessible to everyone who was interested.

To help collect data for KIDS COUNT the Foundation set up a network of child advocacy and research grantees representing every state. The KIDS COUNT organisations use the Data book and [Data Centre website](#) as tools to advocate for policies and practices that support families in caring for their children and help children get on track for lifelong success. To ensure that the state network remains an effective vehicle for supporting children and families, the Casey Foundation invests in the network's leadership, capacity for advocacy and organisational health. Its capacity building strategy for KIDS COUNT grantees involves advocacy support and technical assistance. It supports grantees to obtain, analyse, and interpret data as well as to develop communications capacity and to be strong messengers in their states. The Foundation maintains and develops the KIDS COUNT Network constantly through grantee gatherings and regular conference calls and webinars.

*'The KIDS COUNT network is a very big part of our success in informing and influencing public policy. That's because we have partners in all 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, all of whom help create a powerful echo chamber for our messages.'*

For the Casey Foundation the KIDS COUNT Network acts as a data gathering tool and a channel to influence public policy. The Casey Foundation further supports grantees by providing its own policy expertise at a state and national level. It releases its own publications using KIDS COUNT data to highlight specific challenges, such as juvenile incarceration and reading proficiency.

At its outset the Casey Foundation did not aim to advocate or campaign for policy change. It identified a gap in evidence and wanted to fill it—leading to the data being used to advocate. Over time the Foundation has become more comfortable with its influencing role and now sees policy and systems change as key avenues for achieving large-scale results. The Foundation is now well-known for its major commitment to child advocacy and influencing policy is now a core part of its mission.

*'First we wanted organisations that were good with data. Our focus was then for those that could also communicate—understanding that a two-page fact sheet is better at raising awareness than a sixty-page report—and then we moved to organisations that could advocate.'*

## Litigating for change or changing legislation

Litigation uses judicial processes to obligate government, and other centres of power, to proactively respond when a right is undermined, infringed or made inaccessible. There are different ways and means to litigate for change, each of which can have their own strengths and weaknesses.

Some campaigns are about challenging the administration of a system—for example, taking benefits cases or mounting individual legal challenges through supporting legal casework within organisations. This type of work is generally quite low risk in terms of cost and reputation as the change sought is about redress for individuals, though over time this can still amount to significant additional benefits or entitlements being accrued. The approach can be very successful for small-scale change and occasionally it can lead to wholesale reinterpretation in the law when a legal case sets a precedent. This can, however, make the work higher risk if a government then moves to clarify the law back to what it wanted. More significantly, organisations can be supported to take a judicial review that has the possibility of changing interpretation of the law across a wider area and benefit whole groups of people. Other campaigns want to explicitly change the law across whole areas. Costs and risks for this type of campaigning can be much higher as change is sought on a large scale.

Litigation and changing legislation gives funders the opportunity to play a direct role in changing legislation. Power, publicity and expertise can be used to activate public interest on behalf of marginalised groups or individuals who, although they may have equal rights under law, have neither the access nor the resources to ensure that those rights are observed. The **Oak Foundation** worked with the charity Crisis to develop a national campaign to change key aspects of housing policy. This led to significant changes in the law around housing entitlements with the potential to affect large numbers of people.

However, for any method in this approach timing and circumstances can have a big effect on the end result. Policy change can struggle to succeed without the right conditions in place. For example, a sympathetic administration or relationships with key people in government can get an issue on the agenda of people who make changes. A strong media presence and network of powerful allies can be invaluable if a window of opportunity opens up on a specific issue where a funder can take advantage.

## Raising public awareness on an issue, offering quality marks and standards

For foundations willing to play a public role, using communications and events to raise awareness can be a useful strategy. CEOs and patrons can use their positions to speak out and appear in the media to discuss certain political issues. Quality marks and standards have also been used to shine a spotlight on good practices within these areas. This could also include a public information campaign informing people of their rights or raising awareness of their plights.

This can be a good approach if foundations have a reputation that they can lend to their cause. But it can put their brand at risk. It also risks complicating a message that may be better delivered by those closer to the ground. The foundation will also need expertise in campaigning, resources, and probably a long-term commitment to make this work.

**The Royal Foundation** (UK) uses the Royal Patrons to raise awareness of its causes in the media and among the public in issues such as animal conservation, veteran support and mental health. Heads Together, the latest campaign is a sustained communications strategy using the London Marathon 2017 as the key focus of its work. **The California Endowment** funds several high-profile media campaigns that feature its name prominently. Using surveys to raise public awareness related to suicide is a key method of the **Nippon Foundation's** (Japan) suicide prevention project. It surveyed 40,000 people and found that one in four people in Japan seriously considers suicide. The **Frank Buttle Trust** (UK) launched a quality mark for care leavers in higher education, after raising awareness on the issue of care leavers.

## Convening roundtables and debate with influencers

Foundations can operate as knowledge entrepreneurs, through convening and using roundtables to engage influencers and decision makers around specific topics. In addition to commissioning research, the **King Baudouin Foundation** (Belgium) used roundtables, advisory committees and forums to create dialogue and seek solutions on the topic of increased integration of Muslims into mainstream Belgian society. David Sainsbury, chair of **Gatsby** (UK), chaired a panel that provided recommendations on how to improve technical education in the UK. Parts of the panel's recommendations were informed by research; which Gatsby had commissioned. This is one way that Foundations can use their independence and presence to focus on certain topics or campaigns. Through this, foundations can convene key players, such as governments, research institutions and charities, to work on controversial and sensitive issues.

This requires expertise and time building close relationships with people in government and leaders in society. This also ties the funder closely to the issue, which if controversial, can be risky by attracting negative coverage.

## Creating a mission driven organisation or initiatives without the use of third parties

Foundations may wish to use their resources to set up think-tanks, research houses or campaigning organisations. **The James Irvine Foundation** (USA) created ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career. It has a staff of 20 and offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles, leading demonstration projects, offering coaching and funding to school districts; promoting collaboration through tools and training that it distributes and implements; advises policy makers; and builds awareness through publications, websites, videos, and conferences. The objective of **Bertelsmann Stiftung** (Germany) is to promote research and understanding in its interest areas as a private operating foundation. It does not make grants or provide support for third-party projects and only funds projects that it conceives and initiates itself. This method provides the resources and targets strategy for the initiative to tackle issues in a more permanent and full-on way. However, it is an expensive option, which can encroach into territory of charities.

## Influencing other funders



A few foundations actively work to influence other foundations to play a role in advocacy and campaigning, through direct work appealing to other foundations and by practically providing support and removing barriers that may prevent foundations participating in this way. These are likely to be foundations with experience of advocacy and campaigning themselves.

## Match funding and collaboration

Funding as a coalition and providing match-funding for the advocacy activities of organisations is one way to encourage other funders. By sharing the funding responsibility this minimises the risks involved, which could be appealing both to those wary of working in this space and to those wanting to work on projects that are larger than their investment would otherwise reach. It builds the profiles of smaller funders and builds the range of donors in a grantees network. As well as reducing risks, it can add credibility to the cause and involvement of the one foundation is reduced.

Match funding can sometimes slow the process of getting all the funding required. This can reduce flexibility, which is very important in issue advocacy. The **Atlantic Philanthropies** (Global offices) has offered match funding in specific areas. **Migration Exchange** (UK) is a collaboration of several UK funders who are interested in immigration, integration and national identity including **Barrow Cadbury** (UK), **Esmee Fairbairn Foundation**, **Unbound Philanthropy** and **Sigrd Rausing Trust**. The collaboration helps funders to keep track of key developments and see interesting work to fund. It is a useful learning place for funders who are less involved in the area.

## Promoting funder advocacy

This approach could include working towards legislative change to remove barriers, promoting advocacy, or more simply providing best practice reports, sharing insights and developing forums to discuss this role. This approach makes use of others experiences in what works and what does not in a structured way. The foundation uses its power to give charity leaders the headspace to reflect and help peers build relationships for collaboration and networking. Lighter-touch methods should be peer led and require little administration from the funder. **Packard Foundation** (USA) has a strategy to increase philanthropy in advocating on family planning areas, which includes improving media coverage of these issues. The **Atlantic Philanthropies** has sought legislative change in tax and legal frameworks to empower other funders in this role. **King Baudouin Foundation** in Belgium also aims to stimulate effective philanthropy by individuals and corporations in its interest areas. This requires expertise and experience on campaigning, and, depending on the activities, involvement can be high, along with costs if legal fees are considered.

# KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUNDING INFLUENCING

There are issues that need to be thought about when deciding the appropriate approach for each funder. In the table below, we have summarised some of these considerations. This will not be uniform for every example—for example, controversial topics will carry a lot more risk than non-controversial issues regardless of the means of engaging in advocacy. Many of these issues are closely linked, and funders need to understand what they are willing to do before they begin working in this area, so that they can assess what impact they are likely to have with the tools available to them.

The issues explored in this table are:

- **Risk.** This is both reputational risk to the funder and the risk involved in using the approach. For legal advocacy, the level of risk is likely to be connected to the legislative guidelines on what is permissible and not in local jurisdictions. Being low-risk does not mean that you cannot take part in advocacy work, but it does mean that you should be careful about the method. Sometimes, if the issue is not controversial, the other risks can be tolerated more easily. An important risk that needs to be considered is the legal framework in that country for advocacy work. In the UK the Lobbying Act has recently changed the legality of charities campaigning work, and funders will need to make sure that they and any charities they fund to campaign abide by the law.
- **Involvement.** This is in addition to any work a funder may normally do when giving out grants. Where the funder has a goal that they are trying to achieve, that will normally mean that they get more involved in the campaign. This has implications for cost and skills needed by the funder.
- **Costs.** Additional costs outside of the main grant. This will vary considerably on the topic being considered. It is possible, for instance, to spot opportunities to use legislative tools to get wins which change policy. But it is also possible that the change proves more intractable and that it could take several years to get the desired change.
- **Skills and capacity.** Additional skills and capacity needed from the funder to use the approach. Some of the methods involved are very specialist, such as litigation, or research, and will require staff with the necessary skills either to do the work, or to manage the work and the risks involved. This is closely linked to the question of cost.
- **Legitimacy.** This issue is particularly important in countries where the role of philanthropy is under question, but for most organisations there can be questions about the mandate of trusts and foundations to engage in advocacy work. If a funder is clear about its mandate it can help to negotiate issues of legitimacy and minimise reputation risks. Where a mandate comes from depends on what type of foundation it is. Foundations which have a living founder may not be too worried about their legitimacy to campaign, in the same way individuals can give and campaign. Foundations with a more corporate trustee board may be more concerned about questions about their mandate. Again, there are ways of managing this. Using information provided by grantees in campaigning work can also provide a mandate, but also help to root the advocacy in grass roots work, making it more effective.

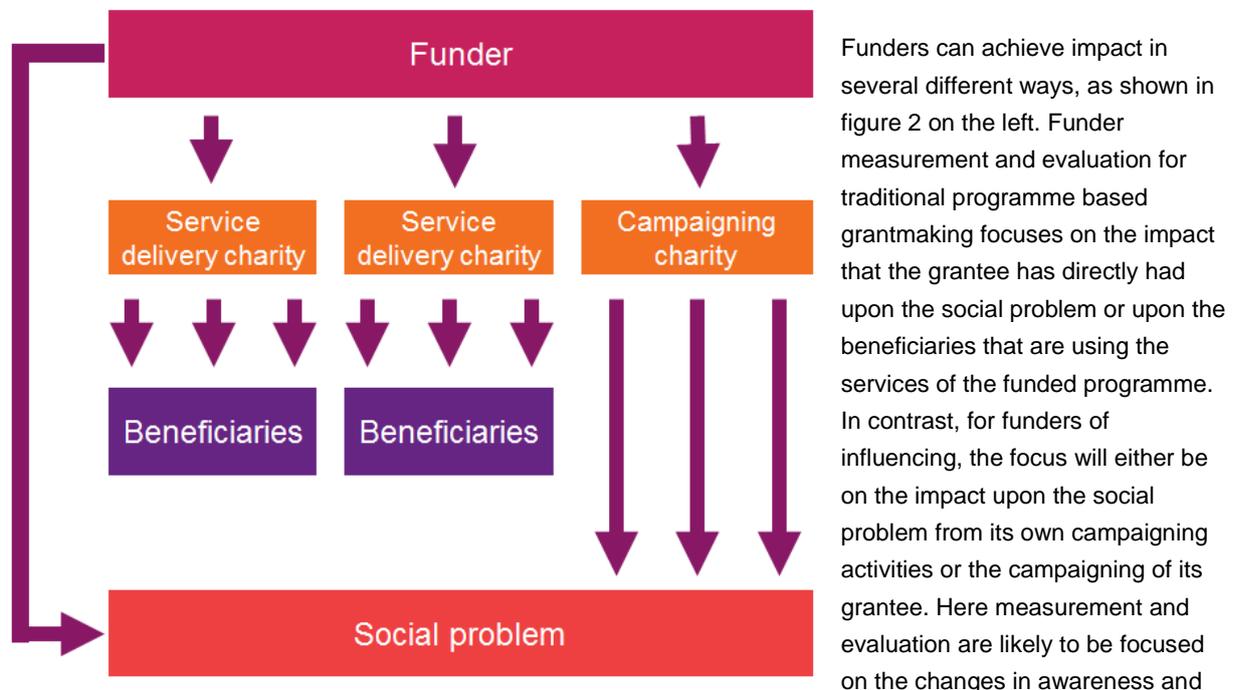
Approach	Risk	Involvement	Costs	Skills and capacity	Questions around legitimacy
 <i>Supporting grantees:</i> Grant funding for advocacy partners on a broad range of topics	Very low	Low	Low	Very low	Very low
 <i>Supporting grantees:</i> Grant funding for advocacy partners targeted on a specific topic	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
 <i>Supporting grantees:</i> Building capacity for advocacy	Very low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Very Low
 <i>Encouraging grantees:</i> Using communications and prizes to showcase grantee work	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium
 <i>Encouraging grantees:</i> Motivating grantees to campaign	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
 <i>Campaigning as a funder:</i> Commissioning research and disseminating it	Very high	Very high	Very high	Medium	Low
 <i>Campaigning as a funder:</i> Collecting evidence	Medium	Medium	Very high	Medium	Medium
 <i>Campaigning as a funder:</i> Litigating for change	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high
 <i>Campaigning as a funder:</i> Raising public awareness on an issue, offering quality marks and standards	Very high	Medium	Medium	Medium	Very high
 <i>Campaigning as a funder:</i> Convening roundtables and debate with influencers	Very high	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
 <i>Campaigning as a funder:</i> Creating a mission driven organisation or initiatives without the use of third parties	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high
 <i>Influencing other funders:</i> Match funding and collaboration	Very low	Low	Low	Very low	Very low
 <i>Influencing other funders:</i> Promoting funder advocacy	Very low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Very low

# MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

## Funder measurement

To drive change in their chosen cause, funders should not only expect their grantees to undertake evaluations, but should also examine the impact of their own work. If funders can understand the impact created by their interventions, they will then reach a better place to understand what works, take more informed decisions and prioritise their limited resources to maximise impact created for the causes and people that they serve. NPC provides several examples of funders that are prioritising measurement in [Making your funding go further](#).<sup>6</sup>

Figure 2: Types of impact of funders



Funders can achieve impact in several different ways, as shown in figure 2 on the left. Funder measurement and evaluation for traditional programme based grantmaking focuses on the impact that the grantee has directly had upon the social problem or upon the beneficiaries that are using the services of the funded programme. In contrast, for funders of influencing, the focus will either be on the impact upon the social problem from its own campaigning activities or the campaigning of its grantee. Here measurement and evaluation are likely to be focused on the changes in awareness and

profile of the social problem; public opinion on the social problem, engagement from influential people and changes in laws connected to the social problem.

While the rationale for funders to measure influencing may be clear, it can be a complicated process. Desired advocacy goals will be influenced by many external factors, they are difficult to think of in terms other than the policies that are won or lost, and these goals generally take a long time to be achieved (if ever). Many funders perceive influencing as something that is very hard to measure, which might persuade them not to get involved at all.<sup>7</sup> Also, while grantees are expected to report their progress back to a grantmaker, a funder providing direct assistance, support, services or advice will not have this same pressure—and therefore is more likely to miss out on the benefits of evaluation in improving practices. The funders we spoke to in our research appreciate these challenges, planning their impact practice and using a variety of approaches to understand the difference that they are making.

## Planning impact practice

An important tenet of impact practice is that it is planned in from the start of the work. Mary Sutton from Atlantic Philanthropies said ‘*We insisted that evaluation was embedded in the grant from the beginning and throughout the grant cycle... it’s not about policing the grant, it’s about how do we learn from this and make course corrections*’. Using Inspiring Impact’s cycle of good impact practice is a good way for to plan impact measurement into the grant from the start.<sup>8</sup>

1. **Plan.** Working out the purpose of your impact measurement and being clear with grantees what is expected from them in terms of reporting on agreed indicators.
1. **Do.** This is where the grantee collects and provides information on its impact, which can be in a variety of forms. The funder should support the grantee in this process, or if it is campaigning directly, it will need to collect information on its activities too.
2. **Assess.** In this part, funders and grantees should use the information that has been collected by analysing and making sense of the data, starting to draw conclusions on the impact that was created.
3. **Review.** Funders should use these findings to learn how to improve and share externally where appropriate. Sharing learning with grantees or other funders is important and can be a form of influencing in itself.



## Measuring Influencing

### General considerations in measuring influencing

Some general considerations apply to measuring the impact of campaigning—whether this is the influencing activities of the funder directly or the activities of a grantee.<sup>9</sup>

- The task of evaluation for funders can be broken down by either focusing on how the funds have **built up capacity in the organisation** that advance its ability to campaign or focusing on the impact made in **addressing the social problem** and the progress towards social change. These differ greatly, and the approach should be dependent on your theory of change.
- Using a **theory of change** approach is particularly useful when working with more than one grantee to help focus on a shared goal. In the equal marriage example, this helped Atlantic Philanthropies in Ireland support grantees running very different campaigns by ensuring that all had a coherent theory of change in place.
- Due to much longer time frames involved in achieving long-term campaigning goals, **interim measures of success** are required to show that work is on track. There should also be an understanding that one year will not necessarily produce notable advocacy milestones.<sup>10</sup>
- In campaigning and advocacy work, organisations are required to be flexible in their approach and react to windows of opportunity that may occur without much warning. This often makes it difficult to plan and can cause a **shift in priorities** that may ignore specific scheduled milestones, that have been set by funders.
- **Funders should act as a critical friend to** grantees by encouraging them to use the learnings from their impact measurement. This proactive form of funder-grantee relationship can help funded organisations improve their approach.
- It is important to prioritise the collection of the right information that will ultimately help the charity. Funders should **work with grantees and evaluators** in this prioritising process, so that reporting produces the greatest benefit for both the grantee and the funder.
- Instead of looking to attribute whether a certain change in policy or public perception resulted from the support of a funder, it is more credible to show that these activities played a **meaningful contribution**. This is because

it is impossible to isolate whether a certain policy outcome resulted from a grantee's efforts alone. Therefore, instead of asking for proof, the emphasis should focus on whether the grantee can establish a credible and plausible case that their work played a meaningful role in producing their intended results.<sup>11</sup>

## Methods used in practice

There is no correct, one-size-fits-all evaluation approach for influencing; this will depend very much on the strategy taken and the advocacy topic. Most work in this area of influencing will not be as straightforward as whether a law is passed or not. Some of the evaluations of campaigning and awareness raising programmes that we came across in our research, use expensive large scale public perception surveys conducted by professional bodies. There is also a small range of more manageable tools available to help track this.

Milestones can be used for tracking progress. If a funder wants to focus on how well set up the organisation is to undertake campaigning, these indicators might be the skills, reach and capacities of the organisation (eg, profile, networks and relationships, technical skills and ability to disseminate information). If the funder wants to focus on the impact made to the cause, it will use indicators that target the audiences that are important to the campaigner (eg, the public, policy influencers and decision makers) and the route to advancing the overall goal (eg, whether this is through media coverage, public awareness, political will and coalition growth).

A good place to start thinking about the different methods, is the Center for Evaluation Innovation's tools for assessing grantee contribution to advocacy.<sup>12</sup> These include self-reported questionnaires to identify their unique role in contributing to advocacy before and after the intervention; interview guides for high-quality feedback; and contribution analysis through external evaluations for more rigorous assessments of specific grantees, coalitions or strategies. The latter requires more resources, but enables funders to have more confidence in the reliability of the information returned.

For funders involved in direct campaigning, NPC's guide *Shifting the dial* breaks down a number of available tools by the target audience of the influencing efforts. For policymakers, the guide highlights the use of policy trackers, policymaker surveys and interviews, parliamentary monitors, Bellwether interviews and ethnography. For other influencers it lists stakeholder interviews, media monitoring and media content analysis. For the public, social media monitoring, attitudes surveys and awareness surveys are explored in more detail.<sup>13</sup>

Funders can play a crucial role in encouraging grantees to put an evaluation framework in place to think how they are making an impact.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through influencing and funding, trusts and foundations have the chance to use their power and resources to make a different type of impact than can normally be achieved through funding services. This can in turn improve services—a change in policy can help make service delivery easier or fight the cause of the social problem rather than the effect alone. It is an important tool that funders can use.

As our typologies show, there are numerous ways to be involved in influencing. Funders can be involved in light-touch ways, by funding the work of charities which are campaigning. Or they can be more involved—setting their own goals, and working alongside their grantees. The impact of the examples we have explored in this report very much depended on the aims, context and effectiveness of the campaign, so we cannot state which approach is most likely to be effective. The research, did however, highlight the levels of risk, costs and power that are often involved, and these will be more suitable to some funders more than others. Further points noticeable from our research included:

- Most funders who are now very involved in campaigning, did not start off so involved. Many of them started to ‘dabble’ in influencing and then got more involved. If a funder is interested in campaigning work, they can get gradually involved. Indeed, there are many funders who engage in this work without it being a strand of work.
- There is little evidence of the impact of this work—particularly of the work that funders themselves are doing. This may be partly a result of the fact that many funders do not see it as a stream of work.
- There is more potential for collaborations between foundations in this area. This would particularly help on sensitive topics where foundations may be worried about reputation risk—a collaboration can help to spread that risk. Collaborations can also help foundations to learn more about the different approaches to influencing.

### Recommendations

- By influencing, funders can make real change on the problems that funders are trying to tackle. More funders should consider whether this role is appropriate for them. Funders should be aware of good practice in campaigning and consider what assets they can bring to this work.
- Funders need to have clear objectives about what they are looking to achieve when engaging in this work, developing theories of change to help them think through their work.
- There are other issues that need to be considered before starting this work—such as power dynamics, legitimacy, cost and skills. There are quite a few risks involved in this work, but few of them are insurmountable. But not considering these issues before the work starts can lead a funder into territory they find uncomfortable. Risks in influencing cannot be considered in isolation as they are highly variable depending on the subject.
- Many of the funders who ended up very engaged in influencing work started off doing this in a small way. Building up skills, expertise and experience over time can help to overcome some of the risks and make trusts and foundations more comfortable with a bolder approach. This could be an area where funders can collaborate with others who have invested in this expertise.
- Funders should evaluate their work and publish these evaluations to help others learn from the work.

## REFERENCES

- 
- <sup>1</sup> For more on this topic, see Hestbaek, C. (2015), [Closing in on change](#). New Philanthropy Capital.
- <sup>2</sup> Center for Effective Philanthropy. (2017), [Shifting Winds: Foundations respond to a new political context](#).
- <sup>3</sup> S. Dilliplane, S. & Devlin-Foltz, D. (2016), [The role and value of the Packard Foundation's communications: Key insights from grantees](#). Aspen Communications.
- <sup>4</sup> For a more specific theory of change see Lamb, B. (2011) [Campaigning for change: Learning from the United States](#). NCVO.
- <sup>5</sup> Beer, T. & Coffman, J. (2015), [The advocacy strategy framework: A tool for articulating an advocacy theory of change](#). Center for Evaluation.
- <sup>6</sup> Kail, A., Kazimirski, A. & Handley, S. (2017) [Making your funding go further](#). New Philanthropy Capital.
- <sup>7</sup> Morariu, J. & Brennan, K., (2009), [Effective advocacy evaluation: The Role of Funders](#). The Foundation Review, volume 1:3
- <sup>8</sup> Inspiring Impact. (2013), [Funders' principles and drivers of good impact practice](#).
- <sup>9</sup> For more information see Hestbaek, C. (2015) as well as Coe, J. & Mayne, R. (2014), [Is your campaign making a difference?](#) NCVO.
- <sup>10</sup> J. Morariu, J. & Brennan, K. (2009), [Effective advocacy evaluation: The role of funders](#). The Foundation Review, volume 1:3
- <sup>11</sup> Beer, T. & Coffman, J. (2015), [Four tools for assessing grantee contribution to advocacy efforts](#). Center for Evaluation.
- <sup>12</sup> T. Beer & J. Coffman (2015), [Four tools for assessing grantee contribution to advocacy efforts](#).
- <sup>13</sup> Lamb, C. & Boswell, K. (2017), [Shifting the dial](#). New Philanthropy Capital.

## TRANSFORMING THE CHARITY SECTOR

NPC is a charity think tank and consultancy. Over the past 15 years we have worked with charities, funders, philanthropists and others, supporting them to deliver the greatest possible impact for the causes and beneficiaries they exist to serve.

NPC occupies a unique position at the nexus between charities and funders. We are driven by the values and mission of the charity sector, to which we bring the rigour, clarity and analysis needed to better achieve the outcomes we all seek. We also share the motivations and passion of funders, to which we bring our expertise, experience and track record of success.

**Increasing the impact of charities:** NPC exists to make charities and social enterprises more successful in achieving their missions. Through rigorous analysis, practical advice and innovative thinking, we make charities' money and energy go further, and help them to achieve the greatest impact.

**Increasing the impact of funders:** NPC's role is to make funders more successful too. We share the passion funders have for helping charities and changing people's lives. We understand their motivations and their objectives, and we know that giving is more rewarding if it achieves the greatest impact it can.

**Strengthening the partnership between charities and funders:** NPC's mission is also to bring the two sides of the funding equation together, improving understanding and enhancing their combined impact. We can help funders and those they fund to connect and transform the way they work together to achieve their vision.

**New Philanthropy Capital**

185 Park Street, London SE1 9BL

020 7620 4850

[info@thinkNPC.org](mailto:info@thinkNPC.org)

[@NPCthinks](https://www.thinknpc.org)

Registered charity No 1091450

A company limited by guarantee

Registered in England and Wales No 4244715

[www.thinkNPC.org](http://www.thinkNPC.org)