

Policy Advocacy in Northern Ireland

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report examines policy advocacy in a very practical way through 7 case studies selected by The Atlantic Philanthropies' Northern Ireland Programme Executives as examples of grantees involved in advocating for social change. The case studies span the three thematic areas of work conducted in Northern Ireland: rights and reconciliation, ageing, and children and youth.
2. The research provides the reader with a background profile of each case study and, using primary qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews, sets out the grantees' perspectives on key issues such as: what is policy advocacy; the tool-kit which they use to advocate; who they target; what constitutes success; how (if at all) they measure their advocacy work; and the potential barriers to promoting social change.
3. Although the substantive work of the grantees is disparate in nature, several general lessons emerge that should have wider application in other Atlantic projects. Explanatory factors which offer the potential for greater policy traction include: the credibility or reputation of the organisation promoting social change; personalities and the effectiveness of relationships with politicians and officials; partnership arrangements amongst bodies promoting a sector or target group; gaining 'insider' status through working alongside the public sector; the legitimacy and influence exerted by advocate groups (e.g. children and older people advocating on their own behalf); and, finding common cause with politicians. The first phase of the report concludes by locating the findings of the case studies within a wider debate on the work of Atlantic in Northern Ireland and the promotion of social change.
4. The second phase of the project reports on interviews with politicians, senior officials and NGO leaders who gave their views on how best to secure policy traction – in other words, the views of the lobbied. The research offers an inside view on both the context and substance of the public policy making process in Northern Ireland with specific reference to devolved government. It outlines the complexities of trying to influence policy in a power-sharing Executive where consensus can sometimes be difficult to achieve even for seemingly innocuous public policies. The location of key policy issues of relevance to Atlantic's interests are identified within the Executive's *Programme for Government 2008 – 2011* as a way of highlighting government commitments in these areas.
5. This report sets out a list of ten key points offered as guidance to Atlantic's grantees in an effort to improve their policy advocacy work including: accessibility of local politicians, contentious and non-contentious policies, new opportunities, the role of civil servants, partnerships or coalitions, evidence, accountability and rights, and professional lobbyists. It concludes with a table which summarises and triangulates the key success factors arising from both parts

of the research – the case studies and views of politicians, civil servants and NGO leaders.

6. The research, overall, highlights the need for a more focused approach to advocating for social justice. This is **not** to suggest that organisations have been unsuccessful in policy advocacy thus far but simply to acknowledge that efforts could be better planned and more effective as a consequence. Here we offer for consideration an American advocacy model (*Advocacy Progress Planner*) which could be adapted in Northern Ireland and provide the means of both devising an advocacy strategy and tracking its implementation. The planner is well suited to the logic model format used by Atlantic to frame the structure and delivery of project outcomes.

1. Background

- 1.1 The focus of the work is to examine how The Atlantic Philanthropies grantees have secured policy traction and the opportunities for transferable learning across other projects operating within the same policy environment in Northern Ireland.

The overall aims of the research are as follows:

- (a) To select case studies in Northern Ireland which can demonstrate evidence of effective advocacy and write up the process involved.
 - (b) To extract from the cases studies transferable learning for other grantees operating in the Northern Ireland context.
 - (c) To disseminate the findings to grantees, programme executives and the wider philanthropic advocacy community.
- 1.2 The methodology in the study is mainly primary qualitative research and the use of secondary materials gathered through the case study organisations. The selection of the case studies, on the advice of Programme Executives, reflects Atlantic (NI) programme areas: reconciliation and human rights; ageing; and children and youth. The various stages of the research can be summarised as follows:
- Case studies across the three thematic areas of Atlantic’s work in Northern Ireland to identify successful policy advocacy through research with grantees, policy makers and politicians.
 - Production of some possible practice guidance notes on advocating for social justice.
 - Dissemination of the learning based on the Northern Ireland advocacy experience.
- 1.3 This report outlines, in some detail, the research from the field work with the case study organisations. It attempts to do 4 things. First, it describes the work of seven case study organisations selected for examination. Second, it reports the views of grantees on key advocacy issues: definition of policy advocacy; tool-kit of advocacy methods; targets for advocacy; examples of successful advocacy work; and barriers to effective advocacy. Third, it synthesises the research from the case studies and the lessons which their experiences offer more widely. Finally, it sets out ten key points to assist organisations in Northern Ireland to advocate for those social justice goals which are integral to their objectives.

2. Policy Advocacy

2.1 What is policy advocacy and how do we do it? The following is a useful working definition adopted by Atlantic:

Public policy advocacy aims to bring about a change in public policy or the law, its interpretation or its application, typically with the objective of correcting a perceived injustice or achieving specific legislative, legal or other change².

2.2 There is no single approach to advocating for social change but rather a mix of advocacy methods will be used depending on the programme. The advocacy toolkit includes several options from which a suitable mix is selected. The range of approaches includes the following:

- **Research and Dissemination:** credible and robust research to raise the profile of the problem and explain the impact of a policy or condition on individuals, communities or a region/country.
- **Raising Awareness:** increasing public consciousness about the nature and extent of the problem through: communications campaigns, media, speeches to influential audiences, public testimony before legislative bodies, regulatory bodies and commissions.
- **Community Organising:** helping those at the local level to organise on their own behalf to voice their concerns and promote their own interests.
- **Grassroots Mobilisation:** demonstrating broad-based public support for specific policy change by mobilising membership organisations, coalitions and others to contact elected officials and their staff or to generate greater public awareness of an issue.
- **Building Capacity:** Supporting the development of the staff, infrastructure and membership of advocacy organisations. Providing core support over an extended period of time enables advocacy groups to build towards more effective efforts in the future.
- **Policy Development:** Developing policy options can aid change by providing advocates, legislators and others with credible suggestions for solving problems. A specific policy suggestion can give focus to a campaign for change and provide supporters with a goal to rally around. Grantee organisations could work with government to draft legislative proposals and to implement specific proposals.

² Atlantic Reports: *Investing in Change – why supporting advocacy makes sense for Foundations*: page 3. Atlantic Philanthropies: May 2008.

- **Lobbying:** Support for legislative changes or balloting initiatives to support social change.
- **Litigation:** Taking legal action to achieve desired changes or fight undesired policies and practices. Litigation may be linked to other kinds of advocacy to ensure that court decisions are implemented vigorously.
- **Electoral activity:** Encouraging more involvement in electoral activity by specific groups (e.g. women) and general voter mobilisation, educating the public on public interest issues³.

2.3 The specific advocacy mix and emphasis will be different for each Atlantic objective, thematic area and geographical region and some of the approaches will overlap (lobbying and awareness-raising, for example, are mutually supportive). Clearly some of these advocacy tools will be more appropriate within particular themes and it is for each programme to decide how best to achieve their log frame outputs and outcomes using the best tools for the job. Beyond choosing the ‘right’ advocacy tools, the key question to be addressed is how to ensure our advocacy efforts are effective in achieving social change. We use case studies across three thematic areas in Northern Ireland to explore this question.

2.4 In an attempt to incorporate as many of the advocacy methods outlined above, seven case studies were selected for detailed examination. These are shown in table 2.1. We describe each of the case studies in turn under the broad headings: background; aims and objectives; approach to their work; some typical examples of their day-to-day activities; and finally, the specific interest which Atlantic has in these projects. Materials used to examine the case studies are drawn from several sources: case study publicity materials and information leaflets; organisational websites; The Atlantic Philanthropies grant applications, log frames, monitoring and evaluation reports; and structured interviews with staff in each of the case studies. The source material is not therefore directly referenced in the case studies which follow.

2.5 The case studies have been written in a way that attempts to provide a reader who has no prior knowledge with an overview of the work which they do. In other words, the report is free-standing. For those with detailed knowledge of some of the case studies, this overview may be rather descriptive but is illustrative of Atlantic’s work across the three broad thematic areas in which they work in Northern Ireland.

³ Source: Atlantic Reports – Investing in Change. *Why supporting advocacy makes sense for Foundations*. Atlantic Philanthropies (May 2008).

Table 2.1: Case Study selection⁴

Case Studies	Research and Dissemination	Raising Awareness	Community Organising	Grassroots Mobilisation	Building Capacity	Policy Development	Lobbying	Litigation	Electoral activity
Reconciliation & Human Rights									
Participation and the Practice of Rights Project			✓	✓		✓	✓		
Law Centre						✓	✓	✓	
Integrated Education Fund		✓				✓	✓		
Ageing									
Age Concern		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Access to benefits project		✓			✓		✓		
Children and Youth									
Early Years	✓			✓		✓	✓		
Children's Law Centre						✓	✓	✓	

⁴ It should be noted that the mix of tools depicted for each of the case study organisations are their primary advocacy methods and does not imply that other tools are not used.

3. Reconciliation & Human Rights

Case Study 1: Participation and Practice of Rights Project



- 3.1 **Background:** In June 2001, a group of trade unionists and community, human rights and equality activists held an all-Ireland conference to debate the theme of participation and rights. It was clear that there was a real need to harness international tools of rights for use in local struggles for equality, and the organising groups were encouraged to take it further. The debate then began to move into local communities to explore the value of this approach to their work on the ground. The history of the project was based on bringing academics, lawyers and international experts together with activists and ‘ordinary’ people from local communities in a process of shared learning. Local communities learned what the international rights standards are that governments are supposed to ‘progressively realise’, and academics and lawyers learned the reality of the absence of this progressive realisation at the local level. This gave birth to a feasibility study in 2004 (supported by Atlantic) into ways of developing a rights based approach to work and issues at the local community level, specifically in North Inner City Dublin and Belfast.
- 3.2 What emerged was that people at the local level, in particular, are often unable to access rights and services because they have been denied participation in decision making. The feasibility study therefore began to articulate a model of how to build capacity and knowledge within local communities so that access to rights and services could be monitored. Where such access was denied, local people were empowered to challenge this by asserting their rights. The feasibility study thus demonstrated that when local people were involved in monitoring local issues using this rights based approach, it yielded more accountable responses from the statutory agencies.
- 3.3 The Participation and Practice of Rights Project (PPR) is a coalition of groups and organisations working on social justice issues in Ireland with an emphasis on North Belfast⁵. The coalition aims to give individuals, groups and communities

⁵ The Organising Groups involved in the PPR Project include: representative community groups from across North Belfast; Combat Poverty Agency; Committee on the Administration of Justice; Irish Congress of Trade Unions; and, Community Foundation NI.

the tools and support they need to actively assert and campaign for their social and economic rights. A 'rights based approach' involves challenging the power relationships and structures which determine who makes decisions, whose voice is heard, and what issues are prioritised at government and statutory levels.

3.4 **Aims and Objectives:** The Participation and Practice of Rights Project exists to promote awareness of international human rights instruments and standards and support marginalized communities and groups to use them in accessing services and achieving equality. Its specific aims are:

- To produce and test a demonstration model of a participative rights based approach to social justice within the communities of North Dublin and North Belfast, which will have wider application beyond the project.
- To use the demonstration model to challenge and change policy and process which will improve the lives of people who experience social injustice and inequality of access to health, education, and housing.
- To develop and promote effective participation and accountability mechanisms which enable local, national and international project stakeholders to hold the State, as duty bearer, to account.
- To further develop and manage an effective, accountable and transparent coalition of organisations which is capable of delivering project objectives.

3.5 **Approach:** PPR uses a human rights based approach (HRBA) to promote government accountability under human rights treaties which they have signed to uphold. Government is obliged to respect, protect and fulfill these rights and submit regular reports to bodies which assess their performance in meeting this obligation. They are obligated to demonstrate how they are working towards realising people's rights. The rights based approach enables people in the community to remind government and service providers of the rights they have promised to respect, protect and fulfill. In a human rights based approach the process of claiming rights, empowering people to take part in the issues affecting them, is every bit as important as the end result.

3.6 Indicators are used as a tool for measuring change - to measure and monitor whether the State is doing what it should be in terms of its human rights obligations: to improve performance and continually raise the standard of living for all. Indicators have been developed as a methodology by the United Nations but the work of the PPR project has been about developing this methodology further to enable it to become a tool used by affected groups as a means of measuring progressive realisation of economic and social rights.

3.7 The selection and monitoring of human rights indicators combine all the principles of the human rights approach, namely: the empowerment of affected

- groups to name their concerns as human rights issues and to use tools of accountability to achieve their rights to equality and participation in decision making processes that affect their lives. The process of setting indicators needs to involve those who are worst affected by the issues. There must be a link between the indicator used and a human rights standard. In this way, the indicator's purpose is twofold – it measures the process of change on the issues concerned, and also the government's progress. Groups set a small number of indicators (5 or 6) including participation and accountability indicators. Once indicators have been chosen and benchmarks identified, it falls to the groups to monitor whether the government is living up to their human rights commitment to progressively realise the right to health, housing and employment.
- 3.8 Initially the groups working with PPR selected indicators relating to the 'outcome' they wanted to see on specific issues that affected them (e.g the housing of families out of high rise accommodation, or the implementation of the 'card-before-you leave' appointment system for discharged mental health patients. Under the human rights based approach, the method by which changes are achieved is as important as the changes themselves, so the groups set indicators on participation and accountability in relation to how their issues were dealt with.
- 3.9 **Examples of work:** Girdwood barracks and Crumlin Road gaol is a 27-acre site in North Belfast which has been designated for regeneration over a 10-15 year period at an estimated cost of £231m. This area includes some of the most deprived communities in Northern Ireland characterised by long-term inequality and deprivation which impact on health, employment, housing and education (which are all economic and social rights). In November 2007, the Department for Social Development launched a consultation on the draft master plan for the site. There were significant concerns among communities that the proposals did not address inequalities and poverty in the local areas as government policy and legislation required. A key concern was that local residents had not been able to participate effectively in the regeneration process or in the decisions that could affect their lives.
- 3.10 In May 2008 PPR supported the convening of a residents' jury to hear evidence and put questions to a wide range of local and international experts on equality, human rights and urban regeneration. The regeneration will last 10-15 years so it was vital to have indicators in place which were able to measure if the process itself was compatible with the relevant human rights principles which related to economic and social rights, namely: participation, equality and accountability. As these principles are intangible, the challenge was to attach them to a concrete process in order to ensure that the indicators were measurable. The Girdwood Residents Jury was able to select human rights process indicators relating to the various stages of the regeneration based on human rights principles and the evidence that they had heard on the process to date and best practice examples from around the world. These indicators were launched in October 2008.

- 3.11 **Atlantic's Interest:** Atlantic currently funds the PPR project, the aim of which is to improve people's access to their rights and services by conducting a demonstration project of a participative rights based approach to social justice. The project outcomes are expected to be:
- A proven approach to accessing justice and services using human rights instruments and principles.
 - Improved access to justice and services for disadvantaged and vulnerable people.
- 3.12 **Policy advocacy in practice:** The use of the term 'policy advocacy' can be fairly abstract amongst Atlantic grantees. Whilst groups may well be engaged in policy advocacy, they do not formally define or even recognise it as such, rather they engage in a series of activities (e.g. community organising, grassroots mobilisation, lobbying), the aims of which are ultimately to promote social change. Of more concern to some projects are the origins of the policies on which they seek to advocate and the process for so doing. For example, Participation and the Practice of Rights' approach to policy advocacy is user-led, rooted in the needs and rights of community groups. They see themselves as helping to facilitate local groups enunciate their own policy demands for social change using a pragmatic human rights based approach in which the participation of the affected groups is central to the decision making process and accountability of 'duty bearers'.
- 3.13 **Advocacy tools:** There is no standard toolkit across grantees – it varies within and across projects. PPR, for example, use a nine-step human rights based model. This involves, *inter alia*, participation by the affected group(s), building national and international alliances in support of the issues concerned, use of existing legislative & policy measures (e.g. section 75, equality impact assessments, freedom of information requests), and the development of indicators and benchmarks to hold statutory bodies to account. Although they use a rights based model which has specific core principles, the practical use of the model can be adapted depending on the issue and groups involved.
- 3.14 The focus for advocacy efforts must, according to international standards, be duty bearers with human rights obligations under international law (in practice, government departments and state agencies). As a project they therefore try to enable affected groups to exercise this accountability in holding the Minister directly to account:

In line with international human rights standards we consider that the duty lies with the decision makers at the highest level in the organisational chain – so we have engaged with the Minister because of his/her ultimate accountability role, although we have also engaged with service delivery agencies as well. The Department could, of course, be part of the problem

and in these circumstances it becomes necessary to approach the Minister. Or there could be a plethora of service delivery agencies involved, in which case it is smarter or more effective to go to the Minister who can push downwards or exert pressure.... But we need to understand how this process can be widened out because not every single group is going to get a meeting with the Minister – we recognise that this is an issue that needs further consideration. (PPR grantee).

The focus of advocacy work can also be like-minded groups, locally and internationally, to build alliances around the issue of concern.

- 3.15 **Advocacy success:** Advocacy success can come in different ways. PPR, for example, saw successful and sustainable social change in two ways – structural and project outputs. In terms of the latter, success is where the tangible project outputs have been realised (e.g. no families housed in the Seven Towers; waste and drainage problems of residents addressed). Structural changes were harder to achieve and could be longer term, such as ensuring that public bodies use public participation in line with human rights standards as an integral process when taking decisions which impact on the lives of people. The ‘Card Before You Leave’ appointment system is a significant policy success where those presenting at emergency departments in Northern Ireland’s hospitals with thoughts of self harm/suicide are offered an immediate appointment or one the following day with mental health services so that patients in need do not have to wait. The scheme was formally launched by the Minister for Health in January 2010.
- 3.16 **Measurement:** The use of human rights standards therefore enable affected groups to measure the success of their advocacy efforts. PPR gave the example of human rights indicators being set by groups and compared with benchmarks against which progress towards their achievement can be measured. The indicators will not necessarily show the success of advocacy as they are designed to measure government’s performance in fulfilling human rights obligations. Other aspects of advocacy are more difficult to measure. For example, there can be transfer of learning between groups illustrated by a quote from a Shankill resident who said that the first time he saw the Seven Towers DVD he was completely inspired by it because of the number of people involved in the project and the level of support they had. How can this transfer of advocacy learning be measured? PPR will attempt to do this through their ongoing evaluation process.
- 3.17 There is not necessarily a direct cause and effect relationship between good advocacy campaigns and social change. At the heart of this relationship is an imbalanced power relationship between the duty bearer and affected groups.

A good campaigner can be seen as someone who can mobilise people around an issue aimed at changing those power relationships and achieving social change. If they have a good campaign and can get hundreds of people to a rally, that’s wonderful, but if it doesn’t bring

about social or structural change, then all they have done is gotten a group of people together (PPR grantee).

- 3.18 Another important point is the fact that many of the voluntary sector groups are funded by government to deliver erstwhile public services and are unwilling or reluctant to advocate for change. They do not want to ‘bite the hand that feeds them’ and, as a consequence, have lost the ability to advocate for social change. This is not necessarily a ‘choice’ adopted by the voluntary sector nor is there an unwillingness to advocate for change by voluntary and community sector groups. These are the very groups which are closest to the ground on social justice issues but have now been incorporated as part of the quasi-state system.
- 3.19 **Barriers:** Civil servants were sometimes seen as a one of the barriers to social change because of the legacy of unaccountability under Direct Rule arrangements, although some grantees had nurtured good personal relations with officials. Others, because of the small policy community network of senior civil servants in Northern Ireland, had experience of officials personalising criticism or challenge to their role, seeing it as a threat to their future career prospects. Some grantees saw devolution and the relative newness of Ministers as an opportunity to foster relationships and act as an alternative independent voice to official policy advice offered by civil servants. Focusing directly on MLAs could also prove to be an effective advocacy route.
- 3.20 PPR was clear that initially other funders would have been less likely to support the testing of the rights based model which they are now piloting to promote social change. Hence they saw Atlantic as a ‘risk-taker’. Atlantic’s early support has allowed PPR to produce evidence that allows other funders to see the impact and potential of the approach. The Atlantic experience for them had also been enriched through collaboration and informal partnerships with other AP grantees (the Law Centre, CAJ, Disability Action etc).

4. Reconciliation & Human Rights

Case Study: The Law Centre



- 4.1 **Background:** The Northern Ireland Law Centre is a not-for-profit agency working to advance social welfare rights. It aims to promote social justice and reduce inequality by providing legal services to members and disadvantaged individuals. It provides a legal service in specific areas of law to people who live or work in Northern Ireland. It was set up in 1977 by local lawyers, trade union activists and community workers and provides legal advice on social security, employment, immigration, mental health and community care to over 500 member and associate bodies. The Law Centre supports the work of independent advice agencies including social services and probation offices, solicitors' practices, trade unions and community based organisations through advice, casework, training, information, publications and policy development. It runs a telephone advice line, provides training, undertakes legal representation and litigation, publishes information and carries out its own research. It is an effective advocate on behalf of disadvantaged individuals and communities.
- 4.2 The main activities of the Law Centre include:
- An advice line which is open to members.
 - Casework and representation service. Strategic court work on referral from members.
 - Training courses for experienced and new benefits and rights advisers.
 - Publishes *Frontline Magazine* four times a year, *Annual Encyclopedia of Rights*, and reports on changes to law and policy.
 - Provides informed policy comment on changes to public policy and legislation.
 - Conducts regular practitioner meetings on: social security, mental health, community care, migrant workers' rights and immigration, at which advisers discuss legal issues and practitioner developments.
- 4.3 **Aims and objectives:** The aim of the Northern Ireland Law Centre is to promote social justice through specialist legal support and services to advice-giving organisations and disadvantaged individuals.

Specific objectives include:

- To continue to provide a high quality legal casework service in social security, employment, immigration, mental health and community care.
- To provide relevant, high quality, accredited and efficient training and specialist information services for advisers.
- To continue to provide quality and timely information.
- To positively influence public bodies and government policy, practice and legislation.
- Partnership working and collaboration.

4.4 **Approach:** This section deals only with the case work aspect of the Law Centre's remit.

Social Security: In most circumstances the Law Centre offers advice on the merits of an appeal to, and representation before, the Social Security Commissioner. They sometimes represent clients in social security appeal tribunals and, given the considerable development in the provision of representation in this area by many of their member agencies, offer consultancy support.

Employment: The Law Centre normally provides advice on the merits of an application to, and if appropriate, representation before the Industrial Tribunal (excluding alleged discrimination which is the role of the Equality Commission).

Immigration: The Law Centre normally provides representation in appeals and applications for reconsideration before the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal and any further relevant challenges by way of judicial review or via the Court of Appeal. They concentrate on appeals from decisions refusing political asylum and will also represent in other immigration appeals from time to time. They represent in bail hearings and work on behalf of detained clients.

Community Care: The Law Centre will assist in advising on entitlements within the area of social services provision. They offer guidance and support within the context of Health and Social Services Trust complaints mechanisms relating to the provision of services. They will initiate legal proceedings, where appropriate, to challenge the refusal of the provision of a community care service (treatment, care services, accommodation or facilities by reason of physical or mental disability, ill health or old age).

Mental Health: The Law Centre gives assistance in cases on the responsibilities of health and social care trusts in relation to treatment and care for people with mental health difficulties. They represent clients before the Mental Health Review Tribunal where they wish to challenge guardianship or detention and compulsory treatment in hospital. They also represent clients in strategic cases in the High Courts and beyond, where appropriate. They have been particularly interested in

challenging delays in arranging tribunal hearings, consent to treatment provisions, informal admissions and delays in discharge and after care provisions.

- 4.5 **Examples of work: Social security.** The Law Centre's appeal to the Social Security Commissioner has led to legal precedents on the requirements on tribunals when they are considering removing an existing award of Disability Living Allowance (DLA). The Law Centre appealed a tribunal decision to remove a client's award of DLA middle rate care. The Commissioner allowed the appeal and emphasised that claimants must be given a sufficiently clear warning that the tribunal will consider their entitlement to an existing award when neither party has disputed it. Tribunals will need to identify what evidence has led them to consider the existing award. They will need to give a cogent evidential basis for any decision which seeks to remove an existing award. If a tribunal does not follow this guidance then its decision may be set aside.
- 4.6 *Migrant worker cases:* The Law Centre is currently representing a client before the Social Security Commissioner in a case that considers the circumstances in which migrant workers may retain a right of residence when they have children attending school in Northern Ireland. As the children of workers have a right to pursue educational studies, the Law Centre is questioning whether the children and a parent have a right to reside to ensure the child's educational rights are observed. A case on similar issues is before the Court of Appeal in England. The Court has decided to refer this issue to the European Court of Justice for guidance.
- 4.7 **Atlantic's Interest:** Atlantic is currently supporting a policy development unit and mental health legal advice service within the Law Centre aimed, *inter alia*, at achieving:
- Positive policy, legislative and practice changes in the rights of individuals and groups.
 - Increased awareness of rights based issues amongst policy makers, politicians and community organisations.
 - Improved access to mental health legal advice and representation.
 - Strengthened capacity of mental health advice agencies and user groups.
- 4.8 **Policy advocacy in practice:** The Law Centre defined policy advocacy as a combination of promoting positive and progressive change in policy and practice or legislation. The latter tends to be targeted at government. The former could be government departments and public authorities, for example Social Security Agency and Health Care Trusts.

Sometimes policy advocacy is about defending what is there already or proactively promoting particular issues. So there is an agenda set by public bodies which want to do certain things and we are questioning whether that is a good thing or not. There are other circumstances where we want to put issues on the government's agenda. This can be a mixture of macro

and micro issues. In our case, macro issues include mental health reforms and the Bamford report where we want to see an overhaul of legislation in the area and the findings of the report implemented. Or, at the micro level, it could be a small change in the legislation or policies that only affect a small number of people – low profile, which doesn't get into the newspapers (Law Centre grantee).

What is important for the Law Centre is that their policy advocacy work is rooted in service delivery advice work in the broad areas of: social security, employment, immigration, mental health, and community care. This gives the Law Centre a legitimacy and credibility from which to advocate for social change.

4.9 **Advocacy tools:** There is no standard toolkit across grantees – it varies within and across projects. The Law Centre suggested that there was no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to advocacy work. Different policy issues demand different approaches. They have successfully deployed a wide range of strategies including relationship building, partnership working, holding seminars and direct lobbying methods. The Law Centre stressed the need for credibility and reputation as an organisation rather than a technique driven approach to advocacy. 'You will not get far with different advocacy techniques if you lack credibility in the field'. One example of the approach taken is illustrated by their work on mental health. The Law Centre met with the Legal Services Committee of the Bamford Review which was looking at the need for new legislation. It was clear to the Law Centre that the remit of the review was so wide ranging, quite radical, and with considerable resource implications for mental health services, that there was no-one to 'pass the baton to'. In these circumstances, it was easy to build a relationship with both the head of the Bamford Review (Roy McClelland) and the head of the legal services team. Effectively the baton was passed to the Law Centre which willingly assumed the role and developed a set of recommendations that went to the Department of Health and Social Services. New legislation will be required to implement the recommendations of Bamford and the Law Centre is currently involved in the discussions on the content of a draft.

4.10 In addition, the Law Centre has set up and convenes a mental health and learning disability alliance to draw in the main NGO organisations working in these fields (e.g. MENCAP, the Northern Ireland Association of Mental Health), some of the professions (e.g. Royal College of Psychiatry), and the Equality and Human Rights Commissions. The alliance is designed to lobby for the implementation of Bamford as a whole.

We know that on our own we (the Law Centre) may be able to influence government on the legislative side but more generally mental health services require extra resources so a broader alliance is needed. This has been useful for us and others in the alliance. For example, mental health organisations have not always worked closely together because they can be in competition for funding. The Law Centre is not seen as looking for

major resources to deliver mental health services and was therefore able to broker collaboration through this alliance (Law Centre grantee).

Although it is still early days for this initiative, it appears to be an effective lobbying mechanism.

4.11 **Advocacy success:** Advocacy success can come in different ways. The Law Centre cited a number of successes in policy advocacy at the macro and micro levels. At the macro level the UK government issued a Green Paper on welfare reform, getting people back to work and off the unemployment register to meet targets to reduce child poverty. The stated rationale was that the more people there are in work, the less likely they are to face child poverty. The government adopted a ‘carrot and stick’ approach to include stopping benefits if you did not return to work. One of the key targets under these reforms is to get lone parents back to work. Regulations operating in Britain state that when the youngest child of a lone parent reaches the age of 12 they must actively seek work – this will reduce to age 7 over a two year period. These reforms are underpinned in Britain by having adequate child care provision to support these regulations, such as a duty on local authorities to provide sufficient child care arrangements, extended opening hours for schools etc. In other words, child care provision should not act as a deterrent to lone parents returning to work.

4.12 The problem in Northern Ireland is that we do not have a child care strategy or a department leading on child care policy. There is no statutory duty on anyone to provide sufficient child care and, as a consequence, schools will not be opened for extended hours offering this type of service. The Law Centre is represented on a statutory UK Social Security Advisory Committee and lobbied during consultation on the regulations that Northern Ireland did not have the necessary child care infrastructure. The committee issued a strongly worded report that highlighted Northern Ireland’s lack of child care arrangements and should not therefore be covered by the new regulations on lone parents seeking work until such provision was made. The Law Centre, in turn, used the report to lobby locally for child care provision.

One of the interesting outcomes of this move was that the Department for Social Development (NI) did not want responsibility for child care provision but wants it to land somewhere else and have therefore been lobbying for one department in government to assume this entire function. Everyone except Department of Education thinks that it should be DE! Our line is that to have a specific government department with sole responsibility is an important step on a journey to proper child care provision (Law Centre grantee).

The Law Centre has therefore successfully lobbied not to adopt the Green Paper in Northern Ireland.

- 4.13 At the micro level the Law Centre cited an example of a Disability Benefits Tribunal panel which must, in terms of its composition, have a member with a disability or who has experienced a disability. A case was referred to the Law Centre where two social security appeal tribunal panel members had chronic arthritis and were in receipt of incapacity benefit. The rules for the benefit stated that if the recipient worked more than 1 day per week then (s)he lost the benefit. Because to their disability, the panel members worked two half days on tribunal business which the Social Security Agency interpreted as ‘more than one day’ and in breach of the benefits legislation. The Law Centre again lobbied through the UK Social Security Advisory Committee and the legislation has now changed to allow people to work ‘the equivalent of one day’.
- 4.14 **Measurement:** The Law Centre argued that it was often difficult to measure the impact of advocacy work, not least because of the long-term nature of the issues which they were trying to change, such as mental health. In some cases, measurement of their contribution to a social change was easy to identify (e.g. the tribunal panel members cited above) because they were the only body involved. In other circumstances the specific contribution, and therefore measurement of advocacy efforts, of a single organisation was impossible to disaggregate in a coalition or alliance of groups.
- 4.15 The Law Centre cited a very obvious example of a cause and effect relationship where the Legal Services Commission decided that they wanted to change the financial eligibility criteria for legal aid. One criterion they were going to introduce was a housing equity test which already applied in Britain. If an applicant’s housing equity was greater than £200k then (s)he would not be eligible for legal aid. The Law Centre recognised that this criterion (at the time of rising property prices) would exclude many people from legal aid. It was also clear that this criterion was more likely to impact on older people who had paid-off their mortgages. The Law Centre alerted organisations such as Age Concern, Help the Aged and the Equality Commission to the differential impact on older people. It produced information to assist these organisations in responding to the consultation. As a result, the Legal Services Commission decided not to implement the proposals on housing equity in Northern Ireland. A direct cause and effect advocacy success.
- 4.16 **Barriers:** The Law Centre saw barriers in relation to where responsibility resided for functions over which they gave advice such as immigration - a reserved matter rather than a transferred function under devolved government. They also noted the ease with which civil servants adopted legislation from Britain rather than considering the circumstances of Northern Ireland. Devolution did however offer access to Ministers, some of whom welcomed an alternative view from outside the civil service. This presented opportunities for independent advice to politicians.

4.17 **Resources:** The Law Centre argued that government departments are reluctant to fund policy work, rather they will fund service delivery, in their case independent legal advice on social security, community care, employment, immigration, and mental health which provides a check/balance on government functions. Atlantic, on the other hand, recognise the legitimacy of policy work and will fund it.

5. Reconciliation & Human Rights

Case Study: The Integrated Education Fund



- 5.1 **Background:** The Integrated Education Fund (IEF) is a financial foundation for the development and growth of integrated education in Northern Ireland in response to parental demand. It was established in 1992 with money from EU Structural Funds, the Department of Education NI, the Nuffield Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. The Fund financially supports the establishment of new schools, the growth of existing schools, and those schools seeking to become integrated through the transformation process. IEF funding is generally seed corn and projects are ‘pump primed’ with the objective of eventually securing full government funding and support.
- 5.2 One of the major constraints to the growth in integrated education is finance. To date it has been parents who start integrated schools not government. This has been achieved by parents either voting to change the status of an existing non-integrated school to integrated or establishing a new-build integrated school (i.e. a “new start up”). In the case of transforming schools, additional support is needed to help this challenging process. In the case of new start ups, there is considerable financial support required to bridge the gap between when integrated schools start and when they attain full government funding.
- 5.3 **Aims and objectives:** The Integrated Education Fund aims to make integration, not separation, the norm in the education system in Northern Ireland through supporting the continued growth of integrated school places. It encourages all schools to provide their pupils with the opportunity to engage meaningfully with children from different cultural and religious backgrounds. IEF supports schools to achieve their full potential and proactively address and celebrate the different dimensions of diversity.

IEF’s objectives are to:

- Strive to meet parental demand by supporting initiatives that will help integrated education exceed 10% of all school places as soon as possible.
- Support innovative and meaningful sharing projects across the traditional education divide.
- Research into, and provide support for, parental demand for integrated schooling in local communities.
- Significantly raise the profile of integrated education and the IEF.
- Increase capacity to influence educational change.

- Raise £20 million to deliver on IEF plans.

These objectives are pursued through partnership with an alliance of key stakeholders.

- 5.4 **Approach:** The first integrated school, Lagan College, was founded in 1981, and by 1989 nine more planned integrated schools were established. In each case a group of local parents had to take the initiatives: locating a site, providing acceptable buildings, furnishing them, employing teachers, and paying the bills. Each school was supported by a local charitable trust set up for that purpose, as well as donations from other supporters, but many individuals had to make personal commitments. Grant aid was not available for capital costs from the Department of Education until each school could prove its viability by demonstrating sufficient long-term enrolments - a process that normally took about three years. This remains the policy today.
- 5.5 The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) 1989 Order placed on the department ‘a duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education’ and provide recurrent funding for integrated schools from day one of opening, provided they met certain criteria, i.e. that the management, control and ethos of the school were such as were likely to attract ‘reasonable numbers’ of both Protestant and Catholic pupils, that the school achieved a minimum number of enrolments in Year 1 for primary schools and Year 8 for second level schools, and that a suitable site be secured. Capital funding was still to be withheld until the viability of long-term enrolment had been proved and, as before, this was a process that normally took about three years.
- 5.6 In 1991, in order to determine a definition of integrated schools, and ‘reasonable numbers’, those most involved in integrated education, namely the school Boards of Governors, Charitable Trusts, staff and parents came together to produce a ‘Statement of Principles’, facilitated by the then newly established Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE). The Statement of Principles, as well as dealing with the ethos and governance of integrated schools, also considers religious balance to exist if at least 40% of pupils, teaching staff and governors are of the Protestant tradition and 40% are of the Catholic tradition, and both communities are accorded equal respect and understanding within the schools.
- 5.7 Meeting the costs of the initial stages of setting up a school, then the recurrent costs if the school did not meet the criteria in force at the time, and the capital costs for at least the first three years put an enormous financial burden on parents. The need to relieve parents of this financial burden and provide a more co-ordinated approach to the funding issue led to the formation of the Integrated Education Fund in 1992.

- 5.8 Changes in government policy also led to major financial burdens as some schools, which had been expected to meet the criteria in place during their initial planning stages, were turned down for government funding when the criteria were subsequently changed. In recent years the government has applied an additional criterion in assessing development proposals for integrated schools, namely, ‘impact on other schools’. This effectively means that where the Department of Education is of the opinion that an integrated school could adversely affect an existing school in the area, whether integrated or non-integrated, the department could reject a proposal.
- 5.9 **Examples of work:** The Integrated Education movement has a track record of success, winning changes in law, precedent and practice to lay foundations for the future. The first success was The Education (Northern Ireland) Act 1978, known as the Dunleath Act, which provided a legal framework for Catholic and Protestant schools to transform to integrated status. At that time no school was prepared to take that step. Today transformation has been accepted by many as a way forward and over 30% of all integrated schools have achieved this status through transformation. Opinion polls show that 84% of people in Northern Ireland believe integrated education is important to peace and reconciliation (Millward Brown Ulster, 2008) and 71% would support a request to transform the status of their existing school to become an integrated school (Millward Brown Ulster, 2006). Studies also show (Young People’s Life and Times Survey, 2003-2005) that children in integrated schools maintain friendships across the religious divide long after they have left education.
- 5.10 There has been significant growth in integrated education in a relatively short period. From 28 children in one school in 1981 to 19,183 children in 62 schools at primary and second level in 2007/08 (approximately 6% of the school population). There is a commitment to the provision of integrated education in the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity, Human Rights, paragraph 13). In addition, integrated education has support from individuals within most of Northern Ireland’s political parties. By proving demand and viability, integrated schools have won state funding of recurrent costs for new schools. Over the years the Department of Education’s criteria for supporting integrated schools, especially as regards the minimum number of enrolments, have fluctuated but successful campaigning has meant that in the year 2000 the criteria were reduced for integrated primary schools, and in 2001 for integrated second level schools.
- 5.11 In November 2008 the IEF launched a 5 year development plan to reach new goals for integrated education. The plan includes raising £20m over the 5 year period to assist existing schools transform to integrated status; to support and develop the growth of existing integrated schools; to encourage all schools to come forward with innovative ideas for working together and challenging the traditional divide in education; and to support parental demand for integrated education in local communities.

5.12 **Atlantic's Interest:** Atlantic has supported several projects in integrated and shared education aimed at:

- Increasing integration in the mainstream education system
- Increasing levels of tolerance and understanding in the wider society and a reduction of prejudice
- Changing government policy on integrated education and securing increased financial support.

5.13 **Policy advocacy in practice:** The Integrated Education Fund interpreted policy advocacy as a process of 'encouraging, persuading and lobbying for a change in policy and challenging accepted norms and attitudes' towards integrated education.

The Department of Education has a statutory responsibility to encourage and facilitate integrated education but frustratingly we have seen time and time again that when it comes to decision making, the department tends to be risk averse and seems only willing to support the *status quo*. Notwithstanding the resourcing pressures they tend to go with the default position rather than making interventions that seek to support the broader societal benefits accruing from greater shared education. (IEF)

5.14 **Advocacy tools:** The Integrated Education Fund uses a variety of advocacy tools including surveys, research, lobbying politicians, responding to position papers, and support from parent groups which endorse integrated education as a concept. In particular however, they have been very successful in eliciting the support of influencers or change agents. Key here have been Baroness May Blood, an all-party parliamentary grouping in Westminster (chaired by Lord Alfred Dubs) and alliances in other legislatures, particularly in the United States where successive administrations have all played a key role in their work. The International Fund for Ireland has also shifted its focus away from direct support for economic development towards reconciliation through shared education. Equally, local politicians are aware that when it comes to attracting economic investment from USA, the education system (or at least ways in which it might be changed) can become part of 'selling' Northern Ireland as a peaceful and reconciled society. Visits to integrated schools are included on the itinerary for potential American investors as part of the Northern Ireland 'tour'. The IEF has therefore developed a network of supporters (former public servants, people who have been involved in politics, etc) to promote the integrated movement.

5.15 Another very important source for lobbying on integrated education is parents.

Parents as well as Boards of Governors of integrated schools can exert a great deal of influence. Whilst the lobbying activities of a support organisation such as the IEF may simply be accepted, parent power can

bring additional weight to bear on particular issues. Information obtained under the Freedom of Information Act has shown that the department takes seriously what the reaction might be to Ministerial decisions. (IEF)

- 5.16 The Integrated Education Fund enjoy good access to the Education Minister, departmental officials and the Assembly's education committee. This makes for open, frank and healthy dialogue. Increasingly the business sector is an important stakeholder for IEF (e.g. the Institute of Directors and CBI) because employers want an integrated workforce, not least to comply with fair employment legislation. The churches, with whom the integrated movement has a sometimes uneasy relationship are also a key interlocutor. IEF has witnessed in recent years a more positive approach by the Catholic church. This has been exemplified by an increased number of parish priests engaging directly with local integrated schools. Also, there appears to be a perceptible change in the language amongst church leaders who now talk readily about the need for 'greater sharing in education'. IEF also supports schools in all sectors through their PACT programme which seeks to disseminate the values of sharing and build relationships with the wider school community.

The IEF is seen as an obvious supporter of integrated schools but we want schools in every sector to see us as an organisation which promotes and supports a culture of trust within and between all schools. (IEF)

- 5.17 **Advocacy success:** The number of schools seeking to transform to integrated status is increasing each year and the Integrated Education Fund views this as a positive development and an increasing focus of their work (new build integrated schools are now less likely because of the current economic and demographic downturn). The process of transformation can often be long and difficult. Knockbreda Primary School, for example, has been turned down twice by the Department of Education despite the overwhelming majority of parents voting for the change. The reason given by the department is around the impact (negative) on other schools and 'concerns about whether the school could meet and maintain the requisite religious balance requirement of 30% of the minority religion'.

Transformation is not an easy process. It is not the same as a group of like-minded individuals coming together to establish a new integrated school from scratch. Initial support might come from the Principal or from the Board of Governors. This will be followed by consultation with other staff, governors and the parent body. Parents will then decide by secret ballot if the school is to proceed and submit a proposal for transformation to the department. Sometimes changing demographics can be seen as part of a rationale for change. Transformation challenges everyone within a school community to think hard about the future direction of the school. For some, the early stages of the process can be contentious while for others the experience will be relatively smooth. (IEF)

- 5.18 The power and tenacity of parents is often the key to the successes in the integrated movement. Priory Controlled Integrated College, with cross party support, secured a new school building through a concerted campaign and professional engagement with the department and successive education ministers. The outcome was due to a group of very committed parents backed by a strong board of governors. Engaging directly with successive education ministers has also proved beneficial for the integrated movement. IEF cite the example of the new Blackwater IC which is the result of a unique coming together of two existing integrated colleges – Rowallane IC (independently funded through the IEF for two years) and the established transformed Down Academy. This collaboration was supported by a prominent champion of the integrated movement engaging with a previous Education Minister Maria Eagle’s to highlight the gap which existed in the provision of integrated post-primary places in mid Down. The Department of Education had already rejected two Development Proposals submitted by Rowallane IC, but officials were asked by the Minister to begin immediately ‘to work with the integrated sector and the parents to see how they might develop a proposal for integrated provision to meet the needs of the area.’ (Maria Eagle, January 2007). Without that particular direct rule ministerial intervention, Blackwater IC would not exist today.

Blackwater Integrated College was a significant lobbying success. We accept that it was a compromise success in that it involved collaboration between two integrated schools, but one of these had been rejected by the Department of Education and, without the then Minister, we suspect that the department would probably have turned it down for the third time... Blackwater has been very successful in reaching this stage but there are still many challenges ahead because opposition remains. (IEF)

- 5.19 **Measurement:** IEF suggested that the success of their advocacy efforts could in part be measured by the number of transformed schools, but it is more difficult to quantify their influence on the wider education debate and landscape. The integrated movement has prompted discussions which challenge the *status quo* by questioning the merits of parallel controlled and maintained education sectors in an era of declining school numbers and a post-conflict society. The sharing agenda cited in the Bain Report, integrated learning partnerships, the increasing acceptance of Catholic and Protestant children sitting together in the same classrooms, might not have happened without the influence of the integrated education movement. Examples of successful cross-community school partnerships in Limavady and Ballycastle also exemplify a wider acceptance of sharing which IEF argue has been influenced by the integrated movement.
- 5.20 The Integrated Education Fund saw a clear causal link between their support for schools to achieve integrated status through transformation and effecting social change. That social change process also involved a belief that integrated education contributed to a reconciled society in Northern Ireland. Transformation, they argued, was about promoting equality of opportunity for parents who wished

to exercise choice in educating their children in an integrated environment, similar to the opportunities afforded to parents who wanted sectorally based provision.

- 5.21 **Barriers:** The Integrated Education Fund identified a number of barriers to their advocacy work, in particular the capacity of politicians to ignore evidence if it did not fit their particular political agenda, or to replace action with endless debate and discussion. They cited with some dismay the case of the Deloitte study, commissioned by OFMDFM during the period of Direct Rule, which only saw the light of day because of an FOI request⁶. Even the views expressed in public consultations can apparently be disregarded. The *A Shared Future* policy framework was the product of a lengthy consultation exercise and yet despite great public interest with over 10,000 public responses, the policy, which was finally published in 2005, has not been actively advanced, even though it is extant policy. A *Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy*, its successor, remains unpublished.
- 5.22 It is the IEF's intention to use overwhelming evidence to encourage change in the attitudes and actions of many politicians. One example of such evidence is the deliberative poll in Omagh which tested parental attitudes to education in the area. However, even when faced with stronger evidence, such as the majority vote by parents of Ballymoney Model PS in favour of transformation, some local politicians still described the outcome as 'social engineering', 'absolutely disgusting' and 'an affront to democracy'. (The Chronicle, Ballymoney, 25/09/08).
- 5.23 IEF wanted to find ways in which they could make the benefits of integrated education more apparent to key decision makers and influencers in the political parties and the churches.

At the end of the day, whilst there have been major successes with transformation, the reality is that not one single Catholic school has transformed to integrated status and this is unlikely to happen for the foreseeable future. Ending the *status quo* in education will involve change for schools in all sectors and we have got to look at ways to engage positively with Church leaders and others so that we can move forward together. (IEF)

- 5.24 IEF saw the Atlantic model as both realistic and forward thinking. AP recognised that the IEF, in itself cannot provide sufficient places in integrated schools to fully meet parental demand, but what it can do is 'to reach the tipping point when government will be forced to do the rest'. Where AP's model is distinctive for them is that it provides financial support both for their campaign for integrated education (outputs driven) and to help them change the education system through promoting a wider social change process.

⁶ *Research into the Financial Cost of the Northern Ireland Divide* (2007). Belfast: Deloitte.

6. Ageing

Case Study: Age Concern Northern Ireland⁷



- 6.1 **Background:** Age Concern Northern Ireland is a regional age organization, governed by Northern Ireland Trustees, which seeks to represent the interests of older people. It is a major voluntary organization committed through campaigning and service provision to promoting the rights of all older people as active, involved and equal citizens. Age Concern Northern Ireland (ACNI) is dedicated to reducing poverty and fighting disadvantage, defeating ageism, recognising diversity, addressing social exclusion, and promoting more effective and responsive public services for older people.
- 6.2 Age Concern provides: information and advice; home care for frail older people; policy development; support to local Age Concern organisations; day care, domiciliary care and residential care for people with dementia; skills training programmes for both older people and care staff; arts and music therapy projects for people with dementia; and, support for carers. Many services are funded through contractual agreements with local government and health and social care trusts. It is also involved in campaigning to influence government policy, in health promotion and community development activity for older people, and research and training. Age Concern works in partnership with organisations in Europe and internationally. Its organisational aspiration is to enable older people to solve problems themselves, providing as much, or as little support, as needed.
- 6.3 There are thirty Age Concern local groups providing day centres, lunch clubs, home visits and transport services which focus on the needs of older people in their area. ACNI delivers a range of community development services designed to support capacity building within the age sector and a full range of active ageing programmes. As such, it supports older peoples groups to organise and deliver programmes of physical activity within the Actively Ageing Well Programme. It delivers community sport programmes to leisure services staff aimed at increasing their awareness and understanding of physical activity for older people and removing barriers to older people participating in leisure centre activities. It developed new opportunities in a number of Council areas across Northern Ireland for older people to engage in physical activity within council facilities

⁷ Age Concern Northern Ireland and Help the Aged in Northern Ireland have joined together in April 2009 to create a single new charity known as Age NI..

- 6.4 **Aims and objectives:** To be a leading authority on the needs and aspirations of older people, working actively with them in the community, responding to need, tackling disadvantage and promoting respect for diversity.

Objectives:

- To promote the rights of older people as active, involved and equal citizens.
- To address issues of age discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.
- To enable older people to participate actively in society and in their local communities.
- To allow older people to have choices and control over their lives.

- 6.5 **Approach:** A good example of the work of Age Concern Northern Ireland is their ongoing commitment to highlight the main issues which affect older people's lives and illustrate how public policy is working to deliver change where needed. The key issues for older people remain constant. These are summarised as follows: feeling safe and secure; being valued within their community; having an adequate income; ready access to health and social infrastructures that will enable them to lead active and healthy lives; equality of opportunity in work and learning; and recognition of the major economic and social contribution they make to the community in their many roles such as carers, entrepreneurs and volunteers.

- 6.6 ACNI is committed to monitoring how policy initiatives play out in practice, to assess policy changes, and to influence the future direction of policy development. ACNI's assessment, *Public Policy for Older People: The Age Agenda for Northern Ireland 2008* tracks indicators which were benchmarked last year, and comments on what has changed positively for older people, what has not changed at all, and what has become worse. Issues are monitored under broad headings as follows: income and pensions; health and social care; housing; transport; and strengthening communities.

- 6.7 **Examples of work:** The Age Concern team of domiciliary staff delivers intensive care packages to older people in the Newcastle, Downpatrick and surrounding areas. The commitment of staff to work over a 24 hour period ensures that dependent frail older people have an opportunity to continue living in their own home with reduced admission to residential care. An innovative approach to supporting people with dementia at home has proven very successful in North & West Belfast. The service provides a range of support measures to enable an older person with dementia to live as independently as possible in their own home. Age Concern Northern Ireland has also provided residential care in Omagh since 1993. In designing the facility, the emphasis was placed on encouraging independence and preserving the right of older people with dementia to live in a safe and homely environment. Support is offered to families, many of whom see the residential facility as an extension of the family home.

- 6.8 Day care remains one of the foundation blocks of community care. It provides a vital link in the life of many frail and isolated older people in the Northern Ireland. It offers the opportunity for older people to retain old skills, learn new ones, and access a range of other community based services including: dietetics, podiatry and hairdressing. ACNI's dementia day care services in Newcastle , Dungannon, Lisburn Newry and Kilkeel offer clients care plans where the individual needs of the person with dementia are recognised and supported.
- 6.9 General day care in Dungannon, East Belfast and Ballynahinch provides frail dependent older people with access to programmes of health and rehabilitation. The centres primarily cater for older people who live alone in many cases in rural areas. Social day care programmes in Lisburn and Portaferry offer social support services to older people who feel very isolated within their community and who benefit from contact with, and the company of, others. Each centre provides a range of activities and educational programmes including crafts and health promotion.
- 6.10 For over 10 years Age Concern Northern Ireland has provided an independent, confidential advice and advocacy service aimed at older people, their relatives and friends. The advice line gives direct access to advice, information and practical support on a wide range of issues including welfare benefits, community care, housing, and health and welfare. Over the past 5 years the advice team has completed over 32,000 pieces of individual work on behalf of older people across Northern Ireland. This has included helping older people to claim £0.5m+ of unclaimed benefits and to manage a significant amount of debt. The advice line is a free service and advice may be obtained in person, by telephone, post or via email.
- 6.11 **Atlantic's interest:** Atlantic is supporting ACNI to build its organizational capacity through leadership, management improvements, marketing, communications, lobbying, advocacy, and sustainability. The outcomes of the project are expected to be:
- A secure and effective organization, fit for purpose, with working systems geared (i) to represent the interests of older people in Northern Ireland and (ii) to influence the policy direction of health and social care.
 - Improved quality of life for older people through the efforts of a more effective NGO acting on their behalf.
 - More secure service delivery element to the organization's work.

Atlantic also supports ACNI through the Changing Ageing Partnership which brings together Age Concern Northern Ireland, Help the Aged in Northern Ireland, Queen's University Belfast and the Workers' Educational Association.

- 6.12 **Policy advocacy in practice:** Age Concern regarded policy advocacy as a ‘process of shaping and influencing the policies and actions of those who have an impact on the lives of older people’. A key element of their advocacy strategy is to see issues around older people mainstreamed in the agenda of government departments and the voluntary and community sector. No longer, they argue, should age be considered the remit of Department of Health and Social Services but rather as a cross-departmental issue which has relevance across several policy areas. They cite the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment as an example where, *prima facie*, consideration of age might not seem obvious, yet some of the most successful entrepreneurs are older people, as are a number of high level professionals such as surgeons in our hospitals – with age comes working experience.
- 6.13 **Advocacy tools:** An important part of the tool-kit for Age Concern is the legislative status of older people under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 where public authorities must ‘have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations’ in several categories, one of which is ‘persons of different ages’ both young and old. Age Concern also highlights the role which evidence gathering and policy analysis plays in their advocacy work. The production of a *Public Policy for Older People: The Age Agenda for Northern Ireland 2008* is an example where key issues are located within the wider policy environment in Northern Ireland.
- Our policy review sets out the policy context for older people, our analysis, and what we would like to see changed. But within this we see ourselves as having several roles ranging from being a critical friend to government through to all-out campaigning on issues which impact on the daily lives of older people (Age Concern grantee).
- 6.14 Age Concern saw their involvement in the *Changing Ageing Partnership* (with QUB, Help the Aged and the WEA) as an important mechanism which combines expertise and skills in a much more coherent way to develop a voice for older people. The partnership’s vision is of a strong, informed voice capable of challenging attitudes and approaches to ageing. In addition, the *Age Sector Platform* is an influential policy advocacy mechanism. There is a range of consortia or forums which make up the age sector in Northern Ireland (e.g Sperrin and Lakeland consortium comprising about 70 groups of older people across Fermanagh & Tyrone; Newtownabbey Senior Citizens Forum; and, North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum). The Age Sector Platform is the representative campaigning and lobbying umbrella body in which ‘older people speak for older people in a unified voice’.
- 6.15 Advocacy targets for Age Concern are ministers, MLAs and local councillors, central to which is raising their awareness of ageing as a key policy issue deserving of their attention. When the debate on whether Northern Ireland should

have a Commissioner for Older People took place in the Assembly, Age Concern provided briefings to the politicians where they ‘recognised their own words’ in the exchanges. As one grantee put it, ‘ageing is getting in the door easier these days because all our politicians are aware of the demography issue and hence it is moving up the policy agenda’. Aside from targeting decision makers, however, Age Concern attached great importance to engaging older people to advocate on their own behalf by providing support and capacity building which would allow them to clearly articulate their demands. The recent revolt by older people in the Republic of Ireland against government plans to withdraw medical cards is a good example of successful advocacy.

6.16 **Advocacy success:** Age Concern cited several successes resulting from their advocacy work. Their efforts in assisting older people to lobby for a Commissioner for Older People had proved to be a major success and an appointment is imminent. The fact that the post will not just be limited to the policy area of health and social care is important. The Commissioner will have a wider remit on the contribution which older people make to society. Age Concern (and their partners) articulated the need for a Commissioner and funded research into the roles and responsibilities which such an appointee would need to take forward on the concerns of the age sector. This included undertaking consultation research for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. There was also cross-party political support for a Commissioner which helped to secure final agreement on the post. The Northern Ireland Executive has completed public consultation on the role of the Commissioner and drawn up a draft Bill.

6.17 Another advocacy success for Age Concern (and their partners) was the role which they played, at the request of the Department of Finance and Personnel, in the review of domestic rating policy in Northern Ireland. By responding to the consultation paper on rating reforms, Age Concern highlighted the adverse impact rating proposals would have on older people. They were then invited to work with the Department and came up with ways to mitigate against hardships in the new arrangements (e.g. lone pensioner allowances, rate deferral schemes). There is, for example, an entitlement to a 20% reduction in rates for any pensioner who: is aged 70 years of over, lives alone and owns his/her own home. There is also an increase in the savings threshold from £16k to £50k for pensioners under the existing lower income relief scheme.

I would describe our involvement in the rating review as advocating to put pounds in older people’s pockets rather than some of our other work which can be about trying to influence or change high level policies without necessarily seeing the same tangible outcomes for older people (Age Concern grantee).

6.18 There have been several other successes:

- The Changing Ageing Partnership secured the removal of the age cap (16 – 24 years old) on apprenticeships advertised by the Department of Employment and Learning and a move to all-age apprenticeships (at levels 2 & 3).
- Age Concern and its partners successfully lobbied for free transport for all people over the age of 60 (reduced from 65) because women retired at that age. This was the culmination of a long campaign which had started in 2001.
- Older people were also strongly represented in working groups established as part of the Bill of Rights process and their contributions feature in the advice offered to the Secretary of State in December 2008.
- The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland now asks public authorities to report what changes they have made in regards to each statutory category under Section 75 which places an onus on all agencies to look to their policies (including age) and be answerable to the Commission on their responsibilities under the legislation.

6.19 **Measurement:** Age Concern pointed out that they had a very clear agenda about what needed to be done for older people but were much less certain about how they could measure their contribution to transformative social change. They didn't formally track the activities which, for example, led to approval of a Commissioner for Older People and the disaggregation of partners' involvement in the process that contributed to the final outcome. Age Concern is currently working with Innovation Network to find ways to assist them in tracking their advocacy efforts.

6.20 Age Concern charted what they described as 'a policy journey' in which there were no obvious cause and effect relationships but where there were milestones along the way to help track the course of their journey. Examples of these milestones were: inclusion of ageing as a policy issue in the Programme for Government, a PSA target on ageing, and a shift in the policies of health and social care away from acute intervention for older people. Age Concern saw their role as a more strategic one in advocacy which complemented local issue-based efforts by groups lobbying on specific problems such as transport and housing. All of this was with a view to reaching 'a tipping point beyond which politicians and civil servants will see the need to mainstream ageing as part of both the formulation and implementation of public policies'.

6.21 **Barriers:** One of the barriers identified by Age Concern to effective advocacy was the potential to politicise the social justice agenda in Northern Ireland. At the outset, for example, older people were not considered for inclusion in the Bill of Rights but have now been incorporated in the emerging proposals. While this is clearly an important development, the fear is that the rift between Unionists and Nationalists over the Bill of Rights and Single Equality Bill will impede the social justice agenda for older people (and others). As one grantee put it:

If you consider the whole equality and human rights agenda in Northern Ireland, our political legacy and ideological differences are hindering progress towards social justice and directly impacting on older people. What Age Concern has tried to do is highlight how the outworking of this agenda can make a difference to older people in, for example, health and social care provision. We need to ensure older people are treated with dignity and respect in local hospitals when they cannot eat and drink for themselves. In other words, we need to translate the language of equality and human rights into the daily lives of older people (Age Concern grantee).

- 6.22 While the politics of equality and human rights is a potential barrier, Age Concern argued that their relationships with several government departments (OFM&DFM, DHSS, DARD and DSD) have built on the good-will which existed between the age sector and local politicians. Age Concern suggested that politicians are now looking to them, not just to describe the problems facing older people but to offer solutions: ‘the door has been left ajar for us to advocate and influence, although it has not yet converted into policy’.
- 6.23 Age Concern saw Atlantic as having a clear emphasis on transformative social change, and policy advocacy was their way of effecting real change in the lives of older people. Importantly, Atlantic was clear that social change had to be evidenced with a significant role for older people in speaking for themselves, both in what needed to happen and whether it had been successful. Age Concern saw their advocacy work as a combination of changing attitudes through education and awareness raising, and influencing the development of public policies and litigation to defend the rights of older people.

7. Ageing

Case Study: Access to Benefits for Older People



- 7.1 **Background:** Access to Benefits (A2B) is a not-for-profit organisation funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies and a grant from the Department of Finance and Personnel. It is working to help older people in Northern Ireland maximise their take-up of benefit entitlements. A2B has developed a ‘benefit calculator’ which calculates benefit entitlement for older people and also signposts them to other benefits which do not depend on their income. Through outreach work A2B identifies older people and the organisations that work with them. This allows them to raise awareness of the calculator and helps them to reach more isolated people, including those in rural areas. A2B also provides training support to overcome any barriers to benefit take-up that many older people face and to help with the technological aspects of the tool.
- 7.2 The initial phase of the Benefit Take Up Initiative was designed to develop the mechanisms and test its feasibility to increase the number of low-income and disadvantaged older Northern Ireland residents receiving the social and medical service benefits to which they are entitled. In Northern Ireland up to 40 percent of households have social security as their main source of income and the number of people of pensionable age is projected to increase from 266,000 in 2002 to 313,000 by 2017. As many as 30% of those older people who are eligible for key benefits are not claiming them.
- 7.3 **Examples of work:** A2B works to help older people across Northern Ireland maximise their take-up of benefit entitlements. It started operations in May 2007 and has 8 staff based in its North Belfast offices. It has been working towards five main deliverables:
1. A2B has set up a free, simple and anonymous website www.a2b.org.uk where an older person or a friend, relative or ‘trusted point of contact’ can input their details into a benefit calculator which will work out their entitlement. This will be presented to the user as a report which they can then print off or save. The website also provides information about a wide range of benefits, details of organisations which both deliver benefits and provide advice and information about them and links to claim forms on other websites. The calculator was launched in Stormont’s Long Gallery in October 2008 and has already been reaping results for older people. In the first year of operation

(until October 2009) older people are now over £2.15m per year better off by claiming entitlements such as: pension credit, housing benefit, rate relief and tax credits.. Through A2B's outreach and training programme, 250 people have now been trained in how to help older people use the calculator and this activity is already planned to continue. A2B has trained a range of community workers including volunteers and MLA constituency office workers and have been working through pharmacies, clergy and health professionals to bring the benefits of the calculator to older people throughout Northern Ireland.

2. With advice and age sector organisations, A2B is developing an Older Person Advisers' Course to provide advisers with the specialist skills and knowledge needed to work with older people.
 3. A2B is jointly developing ways of linking existing information systems used by different organisations which help older people apply for benefits, and to automate complex application forms whenever possible. This is entitled *Case Recording Integration and Application Form Automation*.
 4. A datamine of anonymised information on benefit uptake across Northern Ireland will help improve the effectiveness of future benefit uptake campaigns.
 5. A2B is developing its partnership network of organisations which can help bring the message about benefit uptake to older people. It does this by supporting their outreach and community development work.
- 7.4 **Atlantic's interest:** Atlantic supports the creation of effective models of services for older people. This project aims to:
- Establish a model for improving benefits take-up that can be replicated to other in-need populations in Northern Ireland as well as to other parts of the UK and beyond.
 - Improve the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged older adults by improving their access to currently unclaimed benefits.
 - Increase the sense of empowerment among older adults, as they are given the tools and information they need to make the best choices for themselves about engaging the benefits system.
- 7.5 **Policy advocacy in practice:** A2B saw their advocacy role as getting the message out to people over 60 about their entitlement to state benefits. While their immediate focus was on providing a user-friendly and efficient benefits calculator, the wider goal was about benefits entitlement and achieving much higher rates of take-up. Their advocacy work is informed by talking (in focus groups) to older people and listening to what they say, examples of which are: the benefits system is too complex; older people do not like asking for handouts; they don't know what is available and what else they might be entitled to; they want

written information in a comprehensible format; and, to be given advice in language that they can understand which is not patronising.

- 7.6 **Advocacy tools:** Tools used by A2B included lobbying political parties, their advisors and civil servants. Importantly, however, A2B saw two important forums within the voluntary and community sector as useful mechanisms to scale-up their advocacy efforts: the *Older People's Policy Forum*, and the *Policy and Lobbying Forum*, both of which operated under the rubric/secretariat of NICVA. Although these were recently formed, both offered opportunities for a number of organisations to jointly advocate. The Older People's Policy Forum is open to any voluntary sector organisation working in the age sector (in the broadest sense). It meets about 4 times each year to talk about topical policy issues and invites people to their meetings for more detailed engagement. Similarly, if there is a consultation going on, the Forum will ask the relevant department to make a presentation and may then agree to submit (if appropriate) a combined response. An example of this was the consultation on new health and social services structures which was not a central concern of A2B, but they had some interest in the topic. The Older People's Forum was able to develop and submit a combined response to this consultation. The Forum also acts as a very useful communication and dissemination mechanism for events, circulars and policy updates for members.
- 7.7 The Policy and Lobbying Forum is open to any group in the voluntary and community sector which is interested in lobbying and advocacy. Examples of their activities include: a meeting with a political advisor on how to influence MLAs; the chair of DSD Assembly Committee and the Assembly Clerk spoke to them about how to engage with statutory committees. The forum provides a valuable service for a disparate range of groups interested in the techniques which can be used to lobby and advocate their causes.
- 7.8 Targets for the advocacy and lobbying efforts of A2B include politicians and their constituency office workers who deal with queries from constituents on eligibility for state benefits. A2B see this as a major opportunity to help politicians provide accurate information on benefits, enhance the constituency services they can offer, and raise awareness of the issue with MPs MLAs and local councillors. A2B also work closely with their partner organisations (Age Concern, Help the Aged, Citizens Advice and Advice NI) to collectively promote the uptake of state benefits amongst older people.
- 7.9 **Advocacy success:** A2B has been in operation for a relatively short period of time and cite their involvement in the rating review as a key advocacy success, specifically their collaborative work with the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), Rating Policy Division. A2B has been actively involved in ongoing work on rates relief and the lone pensioner allowance, where they helped DFP to design the application form and generate publicity for the latter. In addition, DFP commissioned A2B to undertake research on the take-up of

housing benefit and rate relief, seeking recommendations on how the system could be improved. This generated huge publicity for A2B in the media and an invitation to the DFP Assembly committee. A2B is now on a steering group overseeing the implementation of the research's recommendations. Additionally, A2B has made strenuous efforts at Board and Senior Management level to garner political and operational support from the Department of Social Development, including a proposal for joint A2B/Social Security Agency pilot programme. What is interesting about the example of success with the DFP above is the comparison with the DSD's less developed relationship with A2B. This is despite the close alignment of the SSA's declared policy with A2B's objectives. As relations with senior SSA officials evolved and the case for collaboration with A2B progressed, these staff were often redeployed to other roles, meaning A2B had to start relationship building and message management from scratch. Working with both bodies was described as follows:

The Social Security Agency is already very focussed on the work which they are doing with the Citizens Advice Bureau which they have been involved with for a few years now... In the work with DFP we have been very lucky in that the senior official involved is very energetic, pro-active and forward thinking – keen to get out of his office and meet real people. He came along to a focus group which we ran with older people and had his eyes opened... If he moved jobs, the relationship could completely change (A2B grantee).

- 7.10 So successful has this voluntary sector and government department partnership been, that A2B and the Department of Finance and Personnel were asked to give a joint presentation to a recent meeting of the Joint Government, Voluntary and Community Sector Forum as an exemplar of best practice in partnership working.
- 7.11 In addition, A2B sees its success as providing what they describe as 'triage' – people come to their website, find out what they are entitled to, and then go to an Advice NI or Citizens Advice member organisation. This process improves the quality of referrals to advice bodies. The service provided by A2B isn't offered by a government department because of the fragmented ways in which state benefits are dealt with.

DSD has responsibility for a lot of benefits, DFP have a few benefits, Revenue and Customs deal with tax credits, DRD looks after Translink and the blue badge, semi-private organisations involved with motability, Community Transport and shop mobility. No one organisation would have taken on a cross-departmental benefits project such as A2B has set up. For example, if you phone up about pension credit, you are unlikely to be told that if you receive disability benefit then you will get more pension credit (A2B grantee).

7.12 **Measurement:** A2B argued that ultimately the key measurement of their advocacy efforts would be a higher take-up of benefits. The problem, of course, is to separate out their impact on such a development – would it have happened in any case (the counterfactual position). They are, with the help of Stratagem, able to track the activities that they are involved in through such things as media monitoring and questions/issues raised in the Assembly, but that does not amount to measuring the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts.

7.13 Drawn from the Age Sector, A2B staff were able to bring to bear previous experience of advocacy in the sector to conclude that effective social change is not always guaranteed by the size and strength of its lobby. They gave the example where older people had lobbied for free nursing and personal care for people in residential homes.

In 2000 shortly after devolution, the age sector did all kinds of campaigning and advocacy work around this issue (which applies in Scotland) and when they stood on the steps of Stormont politicians said they would support it and then went inside and voted against it... No one ever properly explained why. Although we now have free nursing care we still don't have free personal care.

7.14 **Barriers:** A2B perceived the slowness of the legislative process in the Assembly as a barrier, or at least an impediment, to change and the absence of new legislation. DFP is introducing legislation on data sharing which would make it possible for older people to defer their rates. DFP, through the Land and Property Agency, wants to target benefits up-take work. At present there is no data base that will tell them who is over 70 and lives alone, although they have data on who is over 70. If such data were available it could be used to promote information about the lone pensioner allowance. If information was available about who is receiving the highest levels of disability benefits that could also be used to share information about disabled person's allowance (e.g. a reduction in rates if adaptations have been done to their homes). Access to information on those in receipt of pension credit can be compared with recipients of housing benefits for rates relief purposes which should be automatic (those in receipt of the former are entitled to the latter). Legislation on data sharing has therefore huge potential for benefit take-up rates.

7.15 **Resources:** A2B saw additional resources being used to better publicise the benefits calculator and train benefits advisors in its use.

Ideally we would like to see anyone who is answering a phone in a benefits office use our calculator, whether it is the pension credit office, disability or carers office, Housing Executive, Translink, whoever. Further down the line we would like to have the support or buy-in of benefits staff so that we could spend some time with Social Security Agency staff and clarify new rules and regulations for our calculator. Having links on the

SSA website which promoted the calculator would also be a huge benefit (A2B grantee).

A2B fully understood Atlantic's model and their requirements to promote social change. They felt that Atlantic tended to support innovative or untested projects but, in so doing, the rate of social change return could be higher.

8. Children and Youth

Case Study: Early Years



- 8.1 **Background:** Early Years is the largest organisation in Northern Ireland for young children. It is non-profit making and has been working since 1965 to promote high quality childcare for children aged 0 - 14 and their families. On 1st November 2007 the organisation changed its name to Early Years - The Organisation for Young Children. When it started work it was known as the Northern Ireland Pre-School Playgroup Association (NIPPA), but as their work developed they realised that this did not fully reflect their remit. Currently Early Years provides information and training for parents, childcare providers, employers and local authorities.
- 8.2 According to Early Years, the benefits to disadvantaged children of high-quality pre-school care and education are clear. They are healthier, better prepared for school, and less aggressive than children who have not received such support. Evidence of these benefits persuaded the UK government to invest heavily in early years services in England, Scotland, and Wales. Support for young children and their families has been central to Labour Party policy since 1997, leading to spending increases, development of new service delivery models, and long-term investment in professional development of the sector. Northern Ireland, by contrast, has limited policy on early years services. The UK and the European Union provided some financial support for services, but this funding has been mainstreamed. The government in Northern Ireland announced (2006) an additional £25 million allocation for two years earmarked for children. However the financial investment in Early Years still remains at a significantly lower level than the rest of the UK.
- 8.3 **Aims and objectives:** To ensure that all children are: physically and emotionally healthy, eager and able to learn, and respect those who are different from them.

Objectives:

- To promote, maintain, improve and advance with emphasis on play experience, the educational, social, physical, emotional and intellectual development of children, the parents and families of such children and other appropriate persons.

- To encourage the study of the needs and problems of such children and to stimulate and educate the public interest in this and other related educational and social fields.
 - To encourage the formation, maintenance and development of playgroups, parent and toddler groups, full day care groups, crèches and other such groups and encourage appropriate partnerships with parents.
 - To enter into and carry out agreements with central and local government throughout Northern Ireland regionally, nationally and internationally for furtherance of the activities of the Association.
- 8.4 **Approach:** Early Years have a team of specialists and development staff who help groups develop the quality of the work they do with children and ensure that children are learning through play in the first years of their life. They provide ongoing support and advice to playgroups, day cares, crèches, parent and toddler groups and after school groups on an individual, group or peer network basis. The team assists providers in assessing their needs through self-evaluation programmes, planning, implementing and managing all aspects of high quality service provision in Early Years care and education.
- 8.5 Early Years have a voluntary accreditation process for groups to assist them in working towards high quality in their settings. Quality benchmark standards, based on international best practice, have been devised and groups work with their Advisor to meet these benchmarks. Early Years staff assist groups through the accreditation process, which examines all aspects of service provision gathered into fourteen key aspects of Early Years care and education. They also provide training for parents, all adults working with young children in pre-school settings, Sure Start, nursery and foundation stage, and management committees. Sure Start is an innovative, child focused, community based health and education initiative. It aims to give every child the best possible start in life.
- 8.6 **Examples of work:** *Helping ensure children are eager to learn.* Daycare providers in the Early Years network and in SureStart projects implement a model with both a home-visiting element and a group-based element, with children aged 18 - 36 months. The programme supports physical development and whole bodied learning in young children. It focuses on interactions and relationships between the group based practitioners, parents and children.
- 8.7 *Helping children respect differences.* Early Years is implementing its current curriculum on respecting differences with 30 providers. They have contracted with universities and research institutes to evaluate the programme and will use the evaluation results to promote a ‘good relations’ policy in Northern Ireland. This work will result in: a tested curriculum on respecting difference and an associated accredited training programme.
- 8.8 **Atlantic’s interest:** Atlantic is supporting evidence-based services to improve the outcomes for young children. This project is specifically aimed at:

- Reconfiguration of all Early Years services based on lessons learnt from research and evidence. From a base of 60 providers and 1,500 children, the service improvements will roll-out to all 1,200 providers serving 30,000 children.
- Enhancing the reputation and influence of the early years sector throughout Ireland. Over time, the work of Early Years should influence government policy and funding patterns.

8.9 **Policy advocacy in practice:** For Early Years policy advocacy was simply ‘taking a position with a view to influencing a change in public policy’. They saw their approach to policy advocacy as grass roots engagement which emerged from the origins of the organisation in 1965 when women were running childcare services in their own living rooms. Early Years see themselves as adopting a rights based approach to policy advocacy based on the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

8.10 **Advocacy tools:** Early Years highlighted the mobilisation of their grassroots as central to their advocacy approach and constantly refer back to members as key stakeholders promoting the objectives of the organisation. Perhaps one of the distinctive features of policy advocacy for Early Years is their evidence-based approach. They have used Atlantic funding to source a range of international experts as a way of formulating a clear message about the benefits of early years learning. Atlantic has also supported them to develop their own scientific evidence in two large research projects (*Eager to Learn & Respecting Differences*) through randomised trials or experimental design work. Early Years acknowledged that involvement in this research carried risks because of the transparency of the approach and potential to demonstrate limited impact. Equally, with positive results the research provides a solid basis on which to advocate for scaling-up the pilots and will offer statutory bodies assurances about investing in these services in the future.

8.11 There can be a risk however in separating out advocacy as an explicit function within projects supported by Atlantic in that it becomes divorced from the fabric and day-to-day operations of the organisation. The equivalent example is where finance or human resources are seen in an organisation as dedicated support functions rather than an integral part of the core business. This was described by one interviewee as follows:

I say to people, just because my post in this organisation is ‘X’ and we now have a communications manager funded through Atlantic, that does not mean that we were never about lobbying, policy advocacy and communication before then. We were always about those things. Atlantic has forced us to be more visible and up-front about it... We were always comfortable with advocacy being a grassroots activity. We never thought that advocacy happened behind closed doors with civil servants – while that may be part of it, and we have to build relations with officials, but that

was never where our advocacy grew out of as an organisation which depended on our grassroots (Early Years grantee).

- 8.12 Early Years targeted government departments with specific or allied responsibility for childcare: the Department of Education has responsibility for 0-6 year olds; the Department of Health and Social Services has a remit for the registration of childcare groups; the Department of Social Development oversees the voluntary and community sector of which Early Years is a part; and, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has a large number of Early Years consistency members located in rural communities. In addition, Early Years see third level higher education institutions as targets (QUB for research, Stranmillis for teacher training), and the media as a mechanism to disseminate and promote their work. Early Years regularly target MLAs, provide information/leaflets to constituency offices, lobby ministers, their political advisors, and chairs of relevant assembly committees.
- 8.13 Importantly for Early Years, with over 1,000 members in some 17 local offices, the involvement of local branches is a key target for their work. Investing in skills development for their membership is seen as an investment in advocacy. They argue that every member should be an advocate for early years provision and the values associated with it. Early Years see building alliances with other like-minded (NGO) organisations as an important lobbying opportunity. One example is that they jointly lobbied with Play Board and the Northern Ireland Child Minding Association (NICMA) on the Transformation Fund. Early Years foster alliances with other pre-school associations in the rest of the UK, the Republic of Ireland and internationally.
- 8.14 **Advocacy success:** Early Years cited several examples of their success in lobbying. The Labour Government when they came to power in 1997 made a policy commitment that every child in the UK should have access to a pre-school place. At present in Northern Ireland about 95% of children have access and a significant percentage of places are provided via the voluntary and community sector offering the pre-school curriculum. The difference in the rest of the UK is that pre-school voluntary/community provision was displaced by the statutory bodies in the form of nursery schools.

Pre-school provision in Northern Ireland is a key example where we have effected social change by retaining this function in the voluntary and community sector. It is important to note that pre-school play is about much more than the delivery of a pre-school curriculum. In many cases it is the first time that parents really engage with each other within their communities to try and work together to achieve something. The skills are transferable to other community development work. This is why we are drawn to organisations like the Rural Development Council because in some ways we are trying to achieve similar things (Early Years grantee).

- 8.15 Another success for Early Years, through their advocacy efforts, was to impress on the European Union, which was considering from the mid-1990s (post ceasefire) how to consolidate peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, the centrality of young children as social actors in this process. In this regard, Early Years became an EU Intermediary Funding Body (IFB) for the Childhood Fund. This was a significant development and, as a result of European peace funds, both the quantity and quality of provision for young people in Northern Ireland improved greatly. It also led to innovative practice in pre-school provision, one example of which was the media initiative for children developed by Early Years and the Peace Initiatives Institute (USA). This project combines a series of cartoon advertisements with a curriculum aimed at building a better understanding among children, parents and teachers of physical, social and cultural differences. Early Years developed a programme from this innovation and is now funded by the Department of Education to deliver it in nursery, primary 1& 2 schools in Northern Ireland.
- 8.16 Early Years also pointed to their advocacy success in the development of a rural childcare strategy first raised by them as an important issue when they attracted Interreg funding to conduct an action research project on this topic in 1997. Michelle Gildernew, as a newly elected Sinn Féin MP at the time, showed tremendous interest in the findings of the project and ‘it is no coincidence that when she became Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development she put in place a rural development childcare task force and we will have a funded rural childcare programme coming on stream fairly soon’. In addition, Early Years developed a programme for 2-year olds and submitted it to the Department of Education. This programme is now used by the Department to define services for this age group across Sure Start areas.

We would argue that our approach to advocacy is unique in two ways. First, we have a very definite focus on our local network of members as advocates for pre-school provision throughout Northern Ireland. Second, we have tried to present solutions and build relationships as opposed to chaining ourselves to the gates of Stormont! (Early Years grantee).

- 8.17 **Measurement:** Early Years suggested that they needed help to measure the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts. While they felt their organisational goals were very clear and explicit, ‘we don’t know which bits of our advocacy work are being done well’. They gave the example of the scientific research (randomised trials) which is ongoing and the development of measurement scales therein. If the pilot experimental work proved to be successful, the challenge is to lobby for universal access to these services which deliver clear pre-school benefits for young children. They were therefore very specific about what they wanted to do, as articulated through their organisational goals. The research would provide robust quantitative evidence of service effectiveness, but ‘what is missing is the bit in between’ – how best to advocate for scaling-up these services.

- 8.18 Early Years, reflecting on their advocacy successes, questioned the cause and effect relationship implicit in promoting social change where good campaigning and lobbying ‘should’ lead to a shift in public policies.

As a country or region we still have the youngest school starting age in Europe, despite us as an organisation creating lots of noise around this issue. This is a question which I ask myself when I go home at nights – why are 4-year olds still sitting in desks at school... when you travel all over Europe and see other children in a more informal environment. I feel we have been unable to effect change on this policy, the ramifications of which are massive... That said, I do believe that most of what we have advocated on **has** resulted in policy change (Early Years grantee).

- 8.19 **Barriers:** Early Years saw devolution as a positive development in Northern Ireland in that it gave them direct access to local decision makers with whom they can (and have) build relationships which are stable and durable over time by comparison with the transience of Direct Rule ministers. Yet their experience of devolution so far was the slowness associated with the decision making process, citing their long wait (largely because of the Executive not meeting) for a 0 – 6 years pre-school strategy. Early Years also disapproved of the complete focus on the 11+ debate at the expense of other policy issues, equally important in their view. While accepting the necessity of resolving the debate on academic selection at 11 for the education development of children, they argued that evidence pointed to a much greater need for skills development in kids during the 0 – 6 years phase (and in particular 0 – 3 years) for their future life-long learning. There was an urgent need therefore to shift the Executive’s attention to what Early Years described as ‘the 11-minus debate’ central to which was promoting a play-based curriculum and raising the school starting age.

- 8.20 **Resources:** Early Years saw extra resources for advocacy work useful in a number of areas. They considered the addition of a policy unit within their organisation as a mechanism through which they could pursue legislative changes to pre-school provision. Building capacity of parents and their local membership groups to better advocate for change throughout Northern Ireland offered the prospect of a greater return on investment. They also saw the need for additional resources and energies applied to alliance building with other organisations which had young children as the focus of their work. Importantly, Early Years was committed to the implementation of the Government’s Transformation Fund and a move to a graduate-led workforce for those employed in the 0-6 years pre-school provision.

- 8.21 Early Years felt entirely comfortable with the Atlantic model which they described as ‘being on the same page as Atlantic’ and commended the fact that Atlantic had invested heavily in an evidence-based approach to service provision in their sector. They saw this as unique amongst their funders whose primary interest were driven by delivering activities and outputs. Atlantic, they argued,

allowed them the opportunity 'to use science and gave us a bit more independence to innovate'.

9. Children and Youth

Case Study: Children's Law Centre



- 9.1 **Background:** The Children's Law Centre (CLC) opened in September 1997. It was set up in the context of the violence and political impasse which impeded the realisation of human rights since 1969 and impacted disproportionately on children in all aspects of their lives. The peace process offered the potential for the realization of children's rights. This potential further crystallized following the Good Friday Agreement.
- 9.2 The Children's Law Centre is the key advocacy organisation for children's rights in Northern Ireland and straddles the human rights sector and the children's sector. As a rights based advocacy organisation working for and with children, individual children benefit, especially through CLC's legal work, but the focus is on creating the structural and legal frameworks which will establish the realisation and enforcement of the rights of all children. The CLC runs a Free Phone telephone advice line, undertakes strategic legal representation and litigation, provides training in children's rights, publishes information, undertakes policy and legislative commentary, monitors implementation of and promotes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), organises seminars and conferences and conducts research. The CLC fights infringements of individual children's rights and seeks to effect wider policy and legislative change.
- 9.3 Children (or their parents/guardians or those working with/for children) whose rights have been denied contact the Centre. The CLC responds appropriately to all advice queries through initial advice, information or referral. Within a framework of strategic priorities, using casework criteria, CLC will progress for potential legal representation, cases where the resolution of an individual case could bring about significant change in the circumstances of a *class* of children by virtue of clarification of the law/policy or through establishing precedent.
- 9.4 The Children's Law Centre complements existing services provided by the voluntary, community, statutory and legal sector. It works in partnership with children and other agencies committed to realising children's rights. The CLC offers to its members, children and young people: information on children's rights; advice on children's rights and the law as it relates to children; training on

children's rights; and research on, and monitoring of, children's rights. CLC have a youth advisory group of young peer advocates: youth@clc.

9.5 **Aims and Objectives:**

The Children's Law Centre is founded upon the principles laid down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular:

Article 2: Children shall not be discriminated against and shall have equal access to protection.

Article 3: All decisions taken which affect children's lives should be taken in the child's best interest.

Article 12: Children have the right to have their voices heard in all matters concerning them.

CLC's vision and mission statement are, respectively:

- A society where all children can participate, are valued, their rights are respected and guaranteed without discrimination and every child can achieve their full potential.
- The Children's Law Centre, using the law to promote, protect and realise children's rights.

The Children's Law Centre:

Complements existing services provided by the voluntary, community, statutory and legal sectors.

Works in partnership with children, parents and carers and other agencies committed to realising children's rights.

Provides an accessible information, advice and representation service on children's rights and law as it relates to children and young people.

Promotes children's participation and involves young people in directing the work of the centre through youth@clc.

Provides education and training programmes to increase understanding of children's rights legislation.

Engages in legislation and policy commentary and advocates on children's rights.

Promotes and monitors the implementation of children's rights using international human rights standards especially the UNCRC.

9.6 **Approach:** The work of the CLC falls into 4 broad categories:

1. Policy/legislative submissions, campaigning, publicity and lobbying
2. Education and training work.
3. Legal information advice, case work and litigation.
4. Promoting international children's rights standards

Policy work involves identifying strategic opportunities appropriate for lobbying, drafting technical submission against domestic and international children's rights standards, critiquing regulatory and legislative proposals, as well as participation in face-to-face discussion with policy makers in a range of forums. CLC's Human Rights Advisor focuses on the specific issue of ensuring inclusion of children's rights in drafting the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland and promoting international children's rights. The campaigning work conducted by CLC takes a range of forms, and includes participation in coalitions, lobby groups, practitioners' forums, committees and steering groups across the voluntary and statutory sectors addressing a broad range of issues impacting on children's rights and engaging at an international level including at the UN and at the Council of Europe. In recognition of the strategic benefit in raising awareness among people working in education, health & social service, youth justice and other fields relevant to children's rights, CLC has developed a series of training courses.

- 9.7 CLC's legal unit is open to the public through CHALKY, a freephone advice line where two members of CLC staff respond to enquiries concerning the rights of young people under 18. The range of issues arising, the volume of calls received and, in so far as it is possible, the profile of the child are statistically monitored and analysed, which allows CLC to identify strategic priorities, balancing the seriousness of the rights deficit, the numbers of children and young people affected, the particular geographical area, the policy context and the prospects of realizing rights through litigation. The CHALKY co-ordinator and advice worker also conduct casework, following up provision of legal advice to clients through correspondence or other interventions, including representation at appeal hearings such as the Special Educational Needs Tribunal. CLC have recently recruited a member of staff to represent at Special Educational Needs Tribunal. Bi-weekly casework meetings of all legal staff allow analysis of advice calls and case work.
- 9.8 **Examples of work:** Children's rights - compliant legislation, policy and practice. To ensure a framework of legislation against which those who make policy about children's lives draw their authority and are held to account and to ensure that all relevant legislation is interpreted through the lens of children's rights. An important aspect of this is to ensure that the emerging Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland will provide maximum protection for children's rights.
- 9.9 Delivery of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the domestic jurisdiction. The Children's Law Centre has advocated for direct and indirect incorporation of the Convention into domestic legislation. The significant number of recommendations in the recent concluding observations issued to the UK government, which are reflective of the issues CLC raised with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, represent CLC's success in engaging internationally in respect of delivery of the CRC in Northern Ireland. The CLC successfully advocated in this respect on the proposal for and the legislation which established the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

- 9.10 Ensuring children's equality and their enjoyment of their rights without discrimination. Recognising the potential of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to deliver equality of opportunity for children and consequently enable them to enjoy their rights without discrimination. CLC has actively and successfully employed s75 as a tool to promote children's rights, most notably on the issues of: anti-social behaviour orders, reasonable chastisement as a defence in the use of physical punishment in the home, and the use of TASERS in Northern Ireland.
- 9.11 Mainstreaming of the child's right to participate. CLC, building on success to date, most notably having the child recognised as the appropriate litigant in judicial review proceedings, will work to deliver Article 12 UNCRC (children have the right to have their voices heard in all matters concerning them). They will do this by ensuring the child's right to be heard in a range of judicial and administrative proceedings and the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for effective enforcement of children's rights.
- 9.12 Increased awareness of children's rights. The CLC is working to create a culture of children's rights through increased awareness of those rights and of children as rights holders through education, training, information production and dissemination (for both adults and children).
- 9.13 **Atlantic's Interest:** Atlantic is supporting the development of the Children's Law Centre in its fundraising, policy, information and training functions and widening the range of specialist lawyers. This should result in:
- Evidence that public policy and legislation better reflects children's rights.
 - The general public is better informed about children's rights.
 - Politicians, civil servants, and the legal profession have a better understanding of children's rights and are using them.
 - Increased case load in more specialist areas (e.g. mental health or disability).
- 9.14 **Policy advocacy in practice:** For the Children's Law Centre the terminology of 'advocacy' can imply legal advocacy whereas 'policy advocacy' could be understood in its widest sense to incorporate: legal, policy work, education, and lobbying, all with the aim of advocating for the realisation of children's rights. For CLC, policy advocacy incorporates all these approaches described as interdependent, complementary, 'stops in an organ – as one goes up, another can go down'. Hence, litigation might be a high priority at one time whereas at other times a policy response is more appropriate to the issue concerned.
- 9.15 **Advocacy tools:** The Children's Law Centre uses a full tool kit to advocate for the realisation of children's rights. Issues emerge from their advice line (CHALKY – the voice of the child expressed via an advice line) which highlight the weight of concerns for children and young people through the volume of calls

and the nature of the breach of children's rights. From this, they deploy a range of advocacy tools.

In the first instance we will engage in respect of the individual child with the relevant duty bearer (e.g. health trust, education and library board) to realise the rights of that child but also to change how the duty bearer interprets their duty in relation to the issue of concern. If that is unsuccessful, and it is appropriate, we will take that issue to tribunal and try to get a decision which will impact on all children in terms of the policy or legislation. Having exhausted all other remedies we might engage in strategic litigation to effect change for children and young people across the board (CLC grantee).

- 9.16 CLC also engages in third party interventions where they are aware of a relevant issue but are not acting for the client or taking a case in their own name. CLC will apply to become third party intervenors with the permission of the court, when such intervention falls within its strategic priorities and case work criteria and it believes it can bring added value to a case which will assist the court through the provision of a children's rights analysis based on CLC's experience and expertise.
- 9.17 Alongside CLC's litigation work, they also engage in policy and legislative responses to ongoing issues which affect the rights of children. An example of the range of advocacy methods can be illustrated by CLC's involvement in the issue of mental health. In respect of litigation, CLC has taken cases to the mental health tribunal and litigated through a judicial review to try to ensure proper provision to child and adolescent mental healthy services for all children in Northern Ireland with a mental health needs. Such was the seriousness of the breach of children's rights that the CLC now employs a solicitor with responsibility for mental health issues. They also made a substantial submission to the Bamford Review and, as a result, a Children and Young People's sub-group was established as part of the review. They also sat on the Bamford Human Rights Sub Committee and made a number of submissions to that group. As a follow-on they prepared a policy paper in relation to the Executive's response to Bamford. CLC met with the Minister of Health to impress on him the seriousness of the breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the need to deliver on mental health as a key public policy issue. CLC raised the lack of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision in Northern Ireland with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and secured a Northern Ireland specific recommendation in the October 2008 UNCRC concluding observations. CLC have also undertaken training on children's right to mental health services.
- 9.18 CLC staff speak at conferences and seminars which target policy makers, give evidence to assembly committees, lobby political parties and their advisors, raise children's rights at international level (UN Committee Rights of the Child), and regularly engage with the Human Rights Commission, Equality Commission,

Children's Commissioner in Northern Ireland, the NI Policing Board and the Police Ombudsman .

9.19 CLC stressed that they adopted an ongoing advocacy campaign or a 'drip, drip, drip cumulative approach'. Litigation, in itself, is unlikely to be wholly successful and needs to be set alongside, policy, education, information, lobbying and international work. CLC's reputation as a highly regarded children's rights organisation, which does not engage in frivolous litigation, carries weight with duty bearers – this, in itself, could be enough to cause them to reflect on policy decisions.

9.20 For CLC, all duty bearers are targets for advocacy. They have developed good working relationships with relevant senior civil servants and attempt to influence policy formulation which can anticipate any potential breaches of children's rights. In addition, CLC engage with the judiciary and legal profession. In the former, their aim is to assist judges in any appropriate way, in the latter to help raise awareness of children's rights and assist in the training of lawyers working in this specialist area.

9.21 **Advocacy success:** CLC gave several examples of advocacy success as follows:

(a) Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) - CLC's used section 75 to challenge the proposed introduction of ASBOs into Northern Ireland. Although CLC's primary purpose not to have them introduced in Northern Ireland was unsuccessful, there is strong evidence that they influenced their low rate of usage. CLC still continues its work to have them removed because of what they see as a fundamental breach of children's rights.

We lost the battle but won the war on the introduction of ASBOs. We, with other organisations, put ASBOs on the human rights map in Northern Ireland. While the case against their introduction was going on, magistrates were not making ASBOs. We had undertaken training with lay magistrates and the legal profession and solicitors were arguing human rights issues on ASBOs in court. We have been informed that the PSNI were not inclined to seek them and local authorities were nervous about them. Our intervention has made statutory bodies more mindful of the potential breach of rights involved in the use of ASBOs (CLC grantee).

(b) CLC and Save the Children ran a strong campaign for the establishment of a Children's Commissioner in Northern Ireland. CLC worked on the legal framework, resulting in what they described as the 'strongest legislation in the world' when it was first introduced. The legislation remains the strongest within the 5 jurisdictions of the UK and Ireland and conforms closest to international standards in terms of the Paris principles.

- (c) Suspension of a child from school without due process. CLC successfully represented a child (*Re M – a minor*) in a judicial review against a school's decision to suspend him on the grounds that the procedures followed by the school were illegal and unfair. The court found that the school had failed to consult with the parents of the child before reaching a decision to suspend and that the child was too young to protect his own interests or to challenge the evidence. The case is a leading case in the area of school suspensions and has been relied upon as precedent in subsequent education cases before the High Court. All education and library boards have changed their policies on this issue to ensure that the child has a voice and is involved in decisions on suspensions. Significantly it was recognised by the court in *Re M* that the child was the appropriate applicant for judicial review in this circumstances.

9.22 **Measurement:** CLC argued that an effective model of measuring human rights work was only now evolving. The problem with measurement centred around how difficult it was to claim that the intervention of CLC was the most influential in circumstances where there were several organisations or stakeholders involved. CLC's assertion, for example, to have been strategically influential in the limited use of ASBOs in Northern Ireland may well be refuted by others. Part of CLC's ongoing work is to put in place a more robust monitoring system which records daily activities that will become the basis of future advocacy evaluation work.

9.23 **Barriers:** Lack of joined-up government was cited as a barrier to successful advocacy. Some of the issues which Atlantic fund are cross-departmental by their very nature. Children issues, for example, straddle all departments but most significantly the offices of OFMDFM, DHSS, DE and the NIO. Lack of consensus in the power sharing Executive can make the decision making process cumbersome. The Health Minister, for example, wanted to move on the reform of mental health but needed Executive approval and funding from a finance minister of a different political party. The political environment is also volatile and changeable. At the time of the introduction of the Children's Commissioner there was a strong political will in favour of the appointment, at a different time such momentum may not exist. Sometimes, as one of the grantees put it, 'we need to have all our ducks lined up in a row'.

9.24 **Resources:** In the case of CLC, extra resources would be used to disseminate information on judgements and policy changes, and to produce publicity/newsletters on their activities and developments. Resources to follow-up on key litigation decisions would also ensure their delivery/implementation across the board. In-house research assistance to prepare case materials, respond to consultation papers and so on would also be useful.

9.25 The Atlantic model sits very comfortably with the rights based approach espoused by CLC which is not a service delivery organisation. CLC is about advocating for the realisation of children's rights and promoting social justice – this is very much in keeping with the aims of Atlantic.

10. Analysis of case study material

10.1 What are the key messages emerging from the case studies?

Advocacy: Grantees had no clear definition or agreed understanding of advocacy. Several offered their interpretation of what it meant for their organisations and used the terms lobbying and advocacy interchangeably. The case studies demonstrated that advocacy could be used across a spectrum ranging from litigation in order to change policies (CLC and school suspensions & Law Centre on incapacity benefits), through challenging the *status quo* in existing policies (IEF and integrated education), to proactively promoting change (Early Years' play-based curriculum and raising the school starting age). There was also a pragmatism amongst grantees – there is no need to be able to define or collectively agree what is meant by advocacy – much like the elephant, they know one when they see it within their respective policy arenas. Hence, pontificating on the academic nuances of definition was seen as superfluous – just do it!

10.2 **Advocacy tools:** The case studies clearly illustrate that there is no standard tool kit used to advocate for social change, or as one grantee put it, there is no 'one-size-fits-all approach to advocacy'. There is a tool kit with a standard range of advocacy tools - how these are used and the ways in which they are deployed will often depend on the type of project, the political, social and economic circumstances that exist, and the skills and experience of those involved. That said, the case studies provided several general points of note (in no order of importance):

- Evidence/data gathering offered a potential tool for promoting social change – the more robust, the better. The use of randomised trials in Early Years, for example, was both high risk (may conclude interventions achieved little impact) but also high yield (potential for rolling out and mainstreaming programmes).
- In a similar vein, the generation of human rights indicators, exemplified through PPR's approach to citizen participation, provided a powerful mechanism to hold duty bearers to account in a very explicit way and offered the prospect of expanding this process in the most important facets of people's lives (housing, education and health etc.).
- Key influencers are an important advocacy tool use to great effect by the IEF in promoting social change. These may be high profile personalities, or external influencers (American Government, Republic of Ireland Ministers).
- The recently formed lobbying forums (Older People's Policy Forum, and the Policy and Lobbying Forum) supported through the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) may offer a central mechanism for shared advocacy learning and dissemination of good practice.

- 10.3 **Advocacy success:** ‘success’ in policy advocacy is an amorphous concept – what constitutes success in some cases is difficult to define, still less measure. Advocacy ‘success’ comes in many different guises: CLC’s role in thwarting the use of ASBOs; Early Years’ efforts in safeguarding the voluntary and community sectors’ pre-school provision in Northern Ireland; the impact of rates reform on older people (A2B); changes to housing conditions and services (PPR Seven Towers project); the school transformation process for integrated education (IEF); the return of lone parents to employment (Law Centre); and a Commissioner for Older People (Age Concern).
- 10.4 There were however several factors which emerged from the case studies that impacted on the effectiveness of advocacy (in no order of importance):
- The credibility or reputation of an organisation at the vanguard of promoting social change is paramount. An organisation’s standing is critical to how seriously their cause is taken. No amount of lobbying and advocacy will turn a weak organisation into an effective change agent.
 - Personalities and relationship building matter. Civil servants, long entrenched in policy and practice under Direct Rule arrangements, could be shifted with the ‘right chemistry’. Compare, for example, how A2B and the Department of Finance and Personnel (Rating Division) successfully collaborated, as a direct result of leadership amongst senior civil servants, with the Department of Education’s approach to integrated education (IEF example).
 - Partnership arrangements between like-minded organisations promoting a sector or target group (from different perspectives) strengthen the prospects of successful advocacy. This seems so self evident that it might appear a strange inclusion in the ‘success’ factors. Yet the proliferation of groups in the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland, aided by European funding, has created competition between them to secure resources from an ever reducing financial base and, in turn, reduced the prospect of collaboration. Case study examples of successful collaboration in ageing include the Changing Ageing Partnership and the Age Sector Platform.
 - One strategy which appears to have worked well for some of the case study organisations is ‘to make themselves useful’ to elected representatives and officials – a working partnership arrangement of sorts. The Law Centre’s role in the Bamford Review is a case in point where it effectively offered its services and expertise in return for which they became a key inside influencer in shaping the future policy agenda on mental health. The Children’s Law Centre’s role in formulating the legislation within which the Children’s Commissioner now operates gave breadth to the post which would not otherwise have happened. The role played by Early Years in developing a

programme for 2-year olds and its incorporation into Sure Start. Age Concern in providing briefings for MLAs in the Assembly debate on the Older People's Commissioner. In short, co-production of public policies with government departments, agencies, taskforces or commissions offers 'insider' status that is more likely to lead to social change. Those case study organisations which offered an independent source of information to politicians as an alternative to advice given through officials can also increase the effectiveness of their advocacy.

- The use of bottom-up advocacy can be powerful and provide a real legitimacy for the social change espoused. The role played by community groups impacted by adverse and unilateral decisions taken by state bodies, properly mobilised, can act as key agent for change. Equally, the legitimacy of the voice of children (CLC's CHALKY project) and older people advocating on their own behalf (Age Concern) is more likely to resonate with duty bearers. PPR considered that bottom up advocacy combined with policy development tools and recognition of existing imbalanced power relationships is key to ensuring change that addresses the most pressing needs of vulnerable groups. In this way change is sustainable beyond the building of personal relationships
- Several case studies talked about trying to reach a 'tipping point' where their advocacy efforts had been sufficiently effective that government departments recognised the need to mainstream their work (IEF on integrated education; Age Concern on services for older people). This became easier where local politicians under devolved arrangements could find common cause or 'win, win' solutions. A2B gave the example of constituency offices (MPs, MLAs and local councillors) providing benefits advice using their on-line calculator.

10.5 **Measuring advocacy:** One of the key issues highlighted by the case study organisations was the difficulty in measuring their advocacy work. Specifically, a number mentioned the problems in disaggregating their efforts in promoting social change relative to other stakeholders involved in the process. Few had so far developed systems for tracking how their day-to-day activities contributed to success in advocacy, somehow seeing this as labouriously logging what they would do as part of their regular work routine. Measuring the impact of advocacy work in policy areas which, by their nature, were not amenable to short term change was also problematic e.g. meaningful citizen engagement in the decision making process (PPR), substantive changes in mental health services (Law Centre). Some of the case studies cited how their involvement in a particular public policy had contributed to a wider societal debate about the merits of social change. For example, the IEF argued that the integrated education movement had generated a policy debate about 'a shared future' and the role which education should play in a post-conflict society. There was agreement amongst the case studies that all could benefit from finding ways in which their advocacy work could be measured. This was particularly true when there was no obvious causal link between their advocacy efforts and social change.

10.6 **Barriers to advocacy:** The case studies painted a mixed picture on the merits of devolution in promoting social change through advocacy. Some saw local politicians as a source of stability compared to a transient and largely apathetic cadre of direct rule ministers. Devolution also allows for building long term relationships with assembly committees and political parties, both of which could effect social change. Others, however, saw the potential for politicisation, citing how the human rights and equality agenda had become enmeshed in party politics. Securing a power sharing Executive has meant the proliferation of government departments to provide jobs for ministers. The downside of this was that public services were more fragmented and social change harder to effect, one example of which was of the number of departments with part responsibility for children and older people. In addition, some case studies argued that local politicians seemed less receptive to evidence-based policy making citing examples of the current debacle over academic selection (the 11+) and support from parents for integrated education (deliberative poll in Omagh).

The next section will attempt to locate the lessons coming out of the Northern Ireland case studies in the wider debate on social justice.

11. From the case studies to the wider debate

11.1 Ostrander defines social justice funding as:

Philanthropic support for advancing progressive social change, that is, the redistribution of power and resources (economic, social cultural, and/or political) in a more egalitarian direction⁸.

11.2 But how does ‘progressive social change’ occur? Atlantic has many options to spend resources and is confronted with a wide range of theories about how to achieve impact. The logic model is how Atlantic chooses to operationalise its theory of change – a formal explication of how an intervention should achieve its end goals. In other words, the logic model sets out the steps which must be completed for an intervention to succeed. One particular problem with this approach is the assumption that the logic model can include all the relevant determinants in a causal chain leading from intervention to social outcomes. In reality, social outcomes can be influenced by a substantial amount of ‘noise’ outside the system that affects the outcomes. This large residual factor may be a more important determinant of the intervention’s success than the activities contained in the logic model. If, for example, the Alliance Party became the largest political party in Northern Ireland, Atlantic’s current interventions in integrated education and community peace building would benefit significantly from such a development.

11.3 Using the rubric of the logic model, Frumkin (2006) argues that there are 5 broad interrelated approaches to progressive social change which can be summarised as follows:

1. **Individuals:** Training individuals for leadership in a particular field with the assumption that change occurs one person at a time. A focus on building skills and creating opportunities for individuals is appealing because it promises to create an army of agents, ready both to change practice in the field and to lead efforts to change public policy. An example in the Northern Ireland context could be supporting leadership development in interface communities.
2. **Organisations:** Building stronger organisations with the goal of creating greater and more sustainable capacity. Working to support stronger organisations can be seen as a theory of change that prioritises institution building as a critical ingredient in broader efforts to change a field. Atlantic’s support to the Law Centre and the Children’s Law Centre in Northern Ireland might be examples of building sustainable organisational capacity.

⁸ Susan Ostrander (2005) ‘Legacy and promise for social justice funding: charitable foundations and progressive social movements, past and present’: 33 – 59 in D. Faber and D. McCarthy (eds.) *Foundations for Social Change: Critical Perspectives on Philanthropy and Popular Movements*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

3. **Networks:** Establish new networks connecting organisations with common purposes. These networks can support sharing best practices, the pooling of resources, and the mobilisation of advocacy efforts. This process can resolve obvious problems in the voluntary and community sector such as duplication of effort and the inability to learn from others what works. An example in Northern Ireland might be supporting the ageing sector network (Older People’s Policy Forum) and the amalgamation of community groups working in this area (Age Concern and Help the Aged).
4. **Politics:** Influence politics and shape the legislative agenda at both local, regional and UK levels. Policy can be shaped by entering the political arena and exerting pressure on the political process through at least three different approaches. First, projects are supported that stimulate civic engagement by exposing citizens to politics and mobilising them to take action (e.g. PPR’s human rights based approach to public participation). Second, philanthropists can fund groups to inform and educate the public and policy makers. Advocacy efforts can take place at local, regional, national and international levels and often take the form of policy research and information campaigns (e.g. value of pre-school learning through Early Years research). Third, donors make grants to groups which engage in direct lobbying around specific legislative issues (e.g. support to lobby for the Bill of Rights in Northern Ireland). This is different from advocacy in that it focuses on specific legislation – translating donor funding into direct political action.
5. **Ideas:** Generate new ideas and proposals for a field with the goal of shaping the underlying paradigm and conversation. Support is offered to groups which can reorient entire fields and lead to important breakthroughs in basic knowledge. If these new perspectives penetrate the field broadly, they can usher in changes that will have lasting effects not only on the further production of ideas, but on the way practitioners do their work.

Frumkin argues that if these approaches to philanthropy are pursued simultaneously and implemented cleverly, they can reinforce one another and lead to synergies⁹.

- 11.4 What is particularly interesting about Frumkin’s work is what he describes as ‘unresolved issues’ around these interventions. These ‘issues’ are particularly apt when we consider some of the challenges faced by Atlantic in achieving policy traction through interventions in the context of Northern Ireland. If philanthropy operates across all five of the levels (individuals, organisations, networks, politics and ideas) described above, then two major unresolved issues arise. The first relates to the interaction between these levels. The second concerns the relative effectiveness of each level. Frumkin’s discussions on these issues are summarised below.

⁹ Peter Frumkin (2006) *Strategic Giving: The Art and Science of Philanthropy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

11.5 **Interaction between the levels:**

- The five levels start at the micro level of the individual, moving up to the meso level of organisations and networks, and finally to the macro level of politics and ideas. But the interactions among these levels need not be, or are unlikely to be, linear and aggregating. The interactions need not proceed up the levels in a linear fashion. Many funders operate simultaneously at 2 or 3 levels and attempt to capture the synergies across the levels.
- Within and across programme areas many, if not all, five levels of change will be pursued over time. The difficulty lies in specifying how these disparate attempts at driving change within and across fields add up to the kind of broad policy impact that Atlantic wants to achieve in: ageing; children and youth; and reconciliation and human rights in Northern Ireland.
- Philanthropy does not have a clear and compelling way of understanding the change produced by giving at each of the five levels. More important, the field lacks a well defined theory of how change at multiple levels build toward significant effects and whether impact and causal inferences established at one level contribute to and build greater rigour and impact at other levels.

11.6 **Relative effectiveness of each level:**

- Information about the relative effectiveness of the five levels of change is hard to locate because few donors think in terms other than the established dichotomy between service delivery and advocacy. Although there is little consensus about which level is most likely to yield results in a range of different substantive fields, there is some agreement that risk and return are related in philanthropy. Risk and reward increase as one moves from small units of change (individuals) to much larger units (ideas).
- The field of philanthropy lacks much basis for adjudicating between competing effectiveness claims related to change theories. Even if effectiveness could be gauged, it would be hard to establish the inherent superiority of any single change theory across contexts. As a result of the knowledge gap, individual donors and professional staff typically end up falling back on what they know and are most comfortable with.
- Some donors simply believe, or want to believe, that change is ultimately achieved from the bottom up. Start by training leaders, through building stronger organisations, and mobilising these actors to lobby the political system, finally producing new/revised public policies. Other donors take the opposite approach and seek change from the top down. Theories of change do not operate in a vacuum. Other social, economic and political forces contribute to shaping the ultimate outcome of an intervention.

- Theories of change are best tested and refined over time through practice. To get better over time at constructing and applying theories of change, donors must be willing to watch closely how their philanthropy evolves across a wide variety of fields and contexts. The donors can use this information to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of how to produce desired outcomes.

11.7 Frumkin's work suggests a number of fundamental questions for Atlantic's work in Northern Ireland which might prompt reflection across the themes of ageing; children and youth; and reconciliation and human rights.

1. One of the issues identified for Atlantic in Northern Ireland is the difficulty in securing effective engagement and policy traction at the highest political and official levels. As a consequence, should Atlantic seek greater effectiveness at the micro and meso levels? Has AP invested sufficiently, for example, in building networks, connecting organisations with common purposes?
2. Do we understand how change is produced in Atlantic programmes at each of the five levels? What is the cumulative policy impact across the three thematic areas of investment?
3. Do we have a view about which level(s) Atlantic investment is more likely to be effective in achieving social change? Have AP's interventions a more bottom-up or top-down orientation and why? Do we consciously consider the dichotomy between funding direct service provision and advocacy?
4. Does AP rely on 'what we know' – are interventions driven by intuition and hunch, by what we are most comfortable with? Have we learned from the specific social, economic and political context of Northern Ireland 'what works' simply by a 'suck it and see approach'?

12. Case study conclusions

- 12.1 This first phase of the research has, through the medium of case studies across the three thematic areas which The Atlantic Philanthropies fund, interrogated the policy advocacy process. It has considered how grantees define policy advocacy, what tools they use to influence social change, outlined examples of their successes, how they seek to measure their advocacy efforts, and the potential barriers to becoming more effective. The findings suggest a wide range of advocacy approaches and the potential for shared learning between grantees.
- 12.2 What is reported, however, is policy advocacy from the perspective of grantees. Additional research has been conducted in the second part of this report on the views of politicians and officials, those being lobbied by Atlantic-supported organisations. This combines the views of grantees and their lobbying target groups and offers some general lessons on securing policy traction. Importantly, the research concludes with an American-derived model *Advocacy Progress Planner* which is offered to lobby groups as a way of tracking and improving their advocacy work, suitably adapted for the circumstances of Northern Ireland.
- 12.3 Both parts of the research therefore attempt to draw lessons from the ongoing work of Atlantic grantees and, through detailed insights from politicians, civil servants and NGO leaders, set out the political and policy making context within which groups could be more effective in securing social change. The new political context in Northern Ireland, not least devolved government and more stable political institutions, make this study timely. The locally elected Assembly and Executive offer opportunities but also impose some constraints on the way Atlantic's grantees seek to influence public policy. In the round, the research provides a realistic account of working within this context and how groups might become more effective in their ongoing efforts to secure social justice goals.

13. Social Justice Framework

13.1 Atlantic reviewed its strategic objectives during 2008 and the focus of its work is now informed by a social justice framework the characteristics of which have been described by the President and CEO of The Atlantic Philanthropies, Gara LaMarche, in a recent paper as follows:

- A focus on the root causes of inequity rather than the symptoms.
- Striving for lasting systemic and institutional change.
- Employment of a combination of tactics such as policy advocacy, grassroots organising, litigation, and communications that together are more likely to yield enduring results.
- Strengthening and empowering disadvantaged and vulnerable populations to advocate on their own behalf.¹⁰

13.2 Expanding on the detail of this approach to Atlantic's work, he argues:

We would rarely fund direct service in isolation from work to change or implement policy... This is a value judgement in the approach we have taken so far, and that we propose to sharpen in the future, that believes social inequities are more likely to be reduced from the empowerment of those who have been on the short end of the stick than from, say, a belief that the core of the problem is insufficient data that all reasonable-minded parties can agree on... Atlantic believes in strengthening institutions, leadership and movements, particularly amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged...

13.3 How the social justice framework applies in the context of Northern Ireland, he suggests, 'might lead us to see all of our work through the lens of whether it serves to perpetuate peace, and whether it supports emerging political and social structures that encourage, over the long term, the integration of deeply divided societies.' Yet in the fluid political context of Northern Ireland it has proved difficult to secure universal public policy traction in the areas which Atlantic fund. This should not be too surprising since issues such as reconciliation and human rights go to the heart of the political problems which have proved difficult to resolve in Northern Ireland.

13.4 Atlantic supports a diverse range of projects across its three thematic areas (ageing; children and youth; and reconciliation and human rights) typical of which are the following:

- ***Children's Law Centre***: an organisation capacity building grant to strengthen the centre by supporting the development of its fundraising,

¹⁰ Gara LaMarche, *Social Justice as a Framework for Atlantic's Programmes*, September 2008.

policy, information and training functions and widening the range of specialist lawyers.

- ***Human Rights Trust***: grant assistance to enable the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) to continue its campaigning and advocacy work for the protection of human rights in Northern Ireland.
- ***Queen's University Belfast Foundation***: an interdisciplinary research initiative aimed at improving children's lives through increasing the number of organisations in Northern Ireland offering high-quality preventive programmes for children and young people.
- ***Rural Community Network***: 'Skills for Solutions' aims to empower the voice of older people in rural communities through developing their skills to engage more effectively in policy making, and building civic leadership through identifying and testing solutions to rural transport challenges.
- ***Fermanagh Trust***: grant-aid to encourage the development of shared education in Fermanagh by incentivising schools to work more collaboratively and to build an advocacy base on the reconciliation, educational and economic benefits of shared education.

These projects and others face a policy environment in Northern Ireland where it has proved difficult to secure social justice gains.

13.5 The guidance offered in this report is based on a number of primary and secondary source materials. Primary research was conducted across Atlantic's three thematic areas through 7 detailed case study organisations (and reported above) whose staff generously agreed to tell their advocacy stories and share the learning. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with senior civil servants, MLAs from all the political parties, and NGO leaders (total n = 17). Secondary information on policy advocacy is drawn from 3 key source documents:

- ***Critical Masses: Social Campaigning – a guide for donors and funders*** (2008). Gustaf Lofgren, Tris Lumley and Adam O'Boyle: New Philanthropy Capital.
- ***What Makes an Effective Advocacy Organisation?*** (2009). The California Endowment.
- ***Advocacy Progress Planner: An Advocacy & Policy Change Composite Logic Model*** at <http://planning.continuousprogress.org/> (the model was built by a team of evaluation experts led by Julia Coffman of the Harvard Family Research Project and funded by The California Endowment, the Annie E Casey Foundation and The Atlantic Philanthropies).

13.6 What follows is some practical guidance on how to successfully advocate in the specific context of Northern Ireland, and one possible model for tracking and evaluating advocacy success.¹¹ Although the latter is included here in paper format, during the dissemination of this research the on-line version of the *Advocacy Progress Planner* (reference above) will be demonstrated and populated using information from grantees willing to participate. This should act as a pilot to test the viability of the model and adapt it to the specific context of Northern Ireland.

¹¹ The format for this guidance was influenced by a booklet written by Manuel Pastor and Rhonda Ortiz (2009) entitled *Making Chance: How Social Movements Work and How to Support Them* (University of Southern California).

14. Social justice advocacy: political and policy context

- 14.1 The political and policy context is vitally important when considering successful advocacy in Northern Ireland. The 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement created a multi-party elected Assembly and government was devolved to Northern Ireland in December 1999. Since then the institutions have had a chequered history of suspensions. During the period up until October 2002 the Assembly was suspended 4 times and then dissolved until new elections were held in November 2003. The elections resulted in the DUP and Sinn Féin becoming the largest unionist and nationalist parties respectively, changing the balance of power in the Assembly. Following the elections the Assembly was restored to a state of suspension pending a review of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. The St Andrews Agreement (October 2006) set out a timetable to restore devolution leading to elections in March 2007 and a power sharing Executive in May of the same year.¹² The two main parties in the Executive (DUP and Sinn Féin) clashed on major policy issues and the Executive did not meet for a 5 month period in 2008. The political process gained a new momentum with the Hillsborough Agreement (5th February 2010) in which the DUP and Sinn Féin asserted ‘their willingness to ensure the Executive and Assembly reflect better a spirit of partnership, mutual respect and equality which remain vital for the success of devolution’¹³. Testament to this was the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Executive on 12th April 2010.
- 14.2 Politicians and officials recognise that the ‘cost’ of arriving at consensus between the two main political parties has been at the expense of tackling ‘hard’ political issues. Hence, in a bid to shore up or consolidate the power-sharing institutions, politicians from Sinn Féin and the DUP have not been able to address contentious public policy issues. The replacement for *A Shared Future* (the long awaited Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy) is one such example. As one politician described it: ‘what is good for power sharing has not necessarily been good for public policy. Power sharing in our case does not equal good governance.’
- 14.3 The sad reality of Northern Ireland is such that public policy issues, however important, do not yet have electoral significance. Put in the form of a question: does public policy matter? The key thematic areas which Atlantic funds in Northern Ireland: ageing, children and youth, and reconciliation and human rights, are critical to the future quality of life of its inhabitants. We have not however reached the stage of political maturity where people vote on a political party’s performance on delivering a public policy agenda. Does this instil complacency amongst our politicians that we will continue to vote along traditional sectarian cleavages? Advocacy groups need to be aware that the

¹² The Northern Ireland Executive comprises: 4 DUP; 3 Sinn Féin; 2 Ulster Unionist; and 1 SDLP minister. Peter Robinson (DUP) is First Minister and Martin McGuinness (SF) Deputy First Minister

¹³ Agreement at Hillsborough Castle, 5th February 2010: 3, accessible at: http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/castle_final_agreement15_2_-3.pdf

political process is not yet as electorally sensitive to their demands as might be expected. Even in extreme cases it is doubtful, for example, that Sinn Féin voters will desert the party over the contentious post-primary education transfer policies adopted by Minister Caitríona Ruane or DUP voters over Minister Sammy Wilson's remarks on the environment.

14.4 The policy framework within which the Northern Ireland Executive works is the *Programme for Government 2008-2011*. The Executive has set out in the Programme for Government five key strategic and interdependent priorities as follows:

- Growing a dynamic, innovative economy.
- Promote tolerance, inclusion and health and well-being.
- Protect and enhance our environment and natural resources.
- Invest to build our infrastructure.
- Deliver modern high quality and efficient public services.

Whether the balance of these activities stays the same given the changing economic climate remains to be seen. An analysis of the detail of the Programme for Government indicates a number of references to Atlantic's interests (see table 14.1 below).

Table 14.1: Atlantic’s Work and Programme for Government

	References to Atlantic’s themes in Programme for Government
Reconciliation	<p>Interestingly, the word ‘reconciliation’ does not feature in the Programme for Government. Indeed, the policy document <i>A Shared Future</i>¹⁴ developed under Direct Rule has been unofficially sidelined. <i>The Programme for Government 2008-2011</i> refers more generally to building a ‘shared and better future comprising: equality, fairness, inclusion and the promotion of good relations’ (Programme for Government 2008-2011: 6). ‘We will bring forward a programme of cohesion and integration for this shared and better future to address the divisions within our society and achieve measurable reductions in sectarianism, racism and hate crime’ (Programme for Government 2008-2011: 12).</p>
Human Rights	<p>Human rights are included in Public Service Agreement (PSA 7) – <i>Making People’s Lives Better</i>. This public service agreement aims to drive a programme across Government to reduce poverty and address inequality and disadvantage.</p> <p>The <i>objective</i> is to promote equality and the enforcement of rights.</p> <p><i>Actions</i> include: the implementation of the cross departmental gender equality strategy; racial equality strategy; and programme for cohesion and integration for a shared and better future.</p> <p><i>Targets</i>: Introduce measures to work towards the total elimination of the gender pay gap; ensure the central role of the rights of the child; and, work across Government to reform the tribunal system to enhance the enforcement of rights.</p>
Children and Young People:	<p>Children and young people feature in several places in the Programme for Government. There are two Public Service Agreements (PSA 6 & 10) which are particularly important.</p> <p>PSA 6: Children and Family: to ensure that children are cared for, live in safety, are protected from abuse, receive the support, they need to fulfil their full potential, become more independent and grow into well adjusted adults.</p> <p><i>Objectives</i>: Improve the outcomes and life chances of children and young people.</p> <p><i>Actions</i>: Implement the 10 year strategy for children and young people.</p> <p>Take forward the Early Years Strategy.</p> <p>Support exemplar projects of area-based interventions for children and young people.</p>

¹⁴ *A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland* (2005). Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

	<p><i>Targets:</i> Deliver targets as set out in 10 Year Strategy for Children and Young people.</p> <p>A key Public Service Agreement (PSA 10) encourages children to realise their potential by improving access to formal and non-formal education and provision tailored to the needs of disadvantaged children and young people.</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To reduce the gap in educational outcomes by addressing the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.</p>
<p>Ageing</p>	<p>Ageing is included in Public Service Agreement (PSA 7) – <i>Making People’s Lives Better</i> (see above).</p> <p>The <i>objective</i> is to take forward co-ordinated strategic action to promote social inclusion for: lone parents; people with physical/sensory disability; older people; and new and established minority ethnic communities.</p> <p><i>Actions</i> are: to oversee the agreement and implementation of an action plan to tackle poverty and promote social inclusion for older people.</p> <p><i>Targets:</i> Deliver a strong independent voice for older people. Ensure more effective statutory protection for older people as an identifiable group.</p>

15. Advocating for social justice: Ten key points

From the case studies examined, there are ten key observations relevant to advocacy in Northern Ireland.

- 15.1 Accessibility:** It is perhaps stating the obvious that local ministers are more easily accessible and the devolved Assembly more accountable. Local groups however need to exploit their access to ministers, MLAs and local councillors, a number of whom ‘double-job’ (dual mandate) as Assembly members. One of the more successful approaches reported in this study was the formation of an all-party Assembly group¹⁵ of MLAs interested in a particular issue or theme (e.g. children and young people¹⁶; ethnic minority communities¹⁷) supported by a secretariat comprising lobby groups working in this area. Eliciting political support requires carefully targeting elected representatives with a particular interest in a topic who then become champions for the cause in the course of their work in the Assembly.

“Ministers want to make themselves as accessible as possible and to engage with groups. We sometimes have difficulty getting them to delay meeting with groups particularly if we are snowed under with work in the department... Ministers go out and about and talk to people in their public engagements. Door stepping a Minister can result in him/her turning to civil servants for advice on matters raised by chance encounters. MLAs in general are influenced by the correspondence they receive, their constituency case loads and what they hear in surgeries. Individually they will have contacts in the NGO sector that will also influence their thinking.”(Civil Servant)

- 15.2 Contentious policy issues:** The nature of the power sharing Executive, an involuntary coalition of four political parties, means that consensus is often difficult to achieve and seemingly innocuous issues can become politicised in Northern Ireland (e.g. post-primary education transfer and siting of a national

¹⁵ All Party Assembly Groups (MLAs only) and All Party Groups (comprising MLAs and non MLAs) provide a forum through which MLAs and outside organisations and individuals can meet to discuss shared interests in a particular cause or subject. Groups must be registered with the Committee on Standards and Privileges in order to use certain Assembly privileges (eg booking of rooms etc). A Register of All Party Assembly Groups/All Party Groups is compiled and maintained by the Clerk of Standards. The main purpose of the Register is to record: which All Party Assembly Groups/All Party Groups are recognised by the Assembly; who their officers are, and details of any assistance the Group may receive from outside the Assembly.

¹⁶ All Party Assembly Group on Children and Young People: Chair: Mr Roy Beggs MLA. Administrative support provided by Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI). Purpose: To provide a forum to facilitate and enable cross party discussion and co-operation on children and young people’s issues. For further information see:

www.ci-ni.org/index.php/all_party_group_on_children

¹⁷ At March 2009 there were the following groups: Roads Safety; Pro-Life; Climate Change; Ethnic Minority Communities; Energy; Autism; Rural Sustainability; Cancer; Funerals and Bereavement; Diabetes; International Development; Disability; and Construction – see NICVA Assembly Monitor www.nicva.org

sports stadium). Where these policies come within the remit of the Office for the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFM&DFM), as several of Atlantic's interests do, they enter a much more complex decision making arena. The structure includes two ministers, two junior ministers, and eight special advisors (4 Sinn Féin and 4 DUP). Decisions will not be taken quickly and it is crucial to secure the endorsement of special advisors whose role cannot be overstated. For issues which must go for Executive approval, support from the two main parties (DUP & SF), by dint of the decision making arithmetic, becomes imperative.

“The policy making agenda is not as open and pluralist as might be expected in an elected democratic Assembly with the two main parties retaining close ownership at the centre. When issues become sensitive the wagons are circled and DUP & Sinn Féin play their cards fairly close to their chest. There is not the same degree of NGO involvement and the role of special advisors becomes paramount in trying to broker a consensus between the political parties. A key organ is the ‘ministerial representatives group’ which meets weekly and many would say is as important as Executive meetings where public policy is decided.”(Politician)

15.3 Non-contentious policy issues: Where public policy issues are non-contentious, statutory committees of the Assembly can become a key source of influence. Each committee undertakes a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role in relation to their respective departments and plays a key part in the consideration and development of legislation. The potential of statutory committees has not yet been fully realised and some have become bogged down in departmental operational detail rather than strategic decision making. There are however examples where statutory committees in the course of taking evidence and holding public enquiries have been very influential in the policy making process (e.g. enquiry into Child Poverty – Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister; and Charities Act (NI) 2008 – Committee for Social Development). The committees set their own agenda and hence there are opportunities for members to influence the nature of the work.

Three additional considerations are important here. First, issues which have a cross-border relevance (e.g. ageing) may be particularly attractive to Sinn Féin Ministers and MLAs. Second, officials point to the potential influence that other devolved regions (Scotland and Wales) can have on public policy in Northern Ireland (and vice-versa). The whole rationale for devolution makes political parties more reluctant, and in the case of Sinn Féin openly unwilling, to look towards Westminster/Whitehall as the source of public policy. NGO groups could make better use of the potential for lobbying on the grounds of policy transfer where deemed successful from other regions of the UK. Third, a No-Day named motion (a term given to a motion for which no date has been fixed for debate in the Assembly) can be a useful mechanism through which individual MLAs can initiate a debate in the Assembly. A recent example (March 2009) was a no-day

motion on childcare strategy promoted by Sinn Féin MLAs (Jennifer McCann, Sue Ramsey and Martina Anderson): ‘that this Assembly expresses its concern at the lack of availability of affordable, quality childcare and calls on the Executive to implement a coherent and properly resourced childcare strategy.’ Lobby groups need to be more imaginative in influencing the policy agenda.

“It is easy for local politicians to get behind the demands of the age sector but much more difficult to get agreement around integrated education or the Bill of Rights because they are politically contentious. There are therefore ‘wicked’ public policy issues on which it is hugely challenging to advocate for social change because they go to the heart of what divides Northern Ireland along sectarian lines. I don’t believe these hard issues will bring the structures down because they don’t challenge any party’s commitment to the institutions or non-violence but they do pose real questions about the effectiveness of governance in terms of delivering public policies for Northern Ireland. So far we have been given a pass because of the generous financial settlement from the Treasury and huge international good-will. But these will only paper over the cracks for so long and give people freedom not to tackle the hard issues.” (NGO leader)

15.4 New opportunities: Beyond the simple dichotomy of contentious/non-contentious policies there are opportunities for lobby groups to inject new thinking into the public policy agenda. Devolution has, in reality, only functioned consistently since May 2007 (and even then with a period of no Executive meetings). Officials, politicians and the NGO sector agreed that the Executive and Assembly have under-performed on delivering public policies and failed to tackle the ‘hard issues’, in part to stabilise the power sharing institutions but also through political immaturity or lack of experience. Thus far the Executive has become known for its populist policies or what one politician described as its ‘lady bountiful role’ – delay in introducing water charges, free public transport for older people, free prescription charges etc. The guiding policy framework, *Programme for Government 2008-2011*, is seen as the product of political compromise based on what the DUP and Sinn Féin could jointly agree. As one civil servant described it ‘the *Programme for Government* is a nicely written document but it doesn’t contain a lot – the fact that it makes no reference to post-primary education transfer is a measure of the compromise involved.’ The further we move away from violence and consolidating the political structures however, the greater the need for new policy thinking and inputs from lobby groups and other stakeholders.

“We (officials) are having to learn. We didn’t do much policy in Northern Ireland because we didn’t have to. Policy was something that arrived from Westminster and the job, not to oversimplify it, was scoring out ‘England and Wales’ and inserting ‘Northern Ireland’ in a policy paper or a piece of legislation. When you are not exercising a skill over a long period of time, it tends to atrophy. We also lost whatever political astuteness that we

had – we had become disconnected from the local body politic because for 30 years it wasn't necessary to listen to people. It was only necessary to look to Westminster. The NGO sector has a role to play in initiating and promoting policy change.” (Civil Servant).

- 15.5 The role of civil servants:** By their own admission civil servants are much less influential under devolution than direct rule although they argue that their former role was much exaggerated. As one official put it: ‘we were benign autocrats under Direct Rule who could sit above party politics and do things because we thought they were the right things to do for Northern Ireland.’ Lobby groups should not ignore the importance however of including senior officials in their advocacy efforts under devolved government. Civil servants continue to have a significant influence on **how** policy happens although perhaps less on **what**. Officials want to be ‘at the table’ when wider stakeholders engage with politicians otherwise expectations can be raised and the practicalities of implementation are not fully considered. In short, senior civil servants do not like to be bounced into decisions after the event.

“People need to remember that civil servants are here to provide the evidence base and facilitate the process of decision making and then to help implement policies. It is therefore helpful to the civil service for outside stakeholders to engage with them when lobbying ministers and MLAs. There is an advantage in everyone having a shared understanding of what the issues are.”(Civil Servant)

- 15.6 Partnerships or coalitions:** The plethora of NGO groups and the disparate nature of their demands call into question the varying levels of effectiveness in advocating for change. Some groups are professional, know the devolved system, and have built up relationships with politicians and civil servants over a long period of time. Generous European funding over the years has resulted in a growing number of groups and increased competition for resources. Groups working in the same broad sector however, need to find common cause if they are to be successful advocates for social justice. Individual effort, however well-planned, will be much less effective than a well-managed coalition pushing a single message. Importantly, NGO leaders have stressed the need to recognise that policy change can be a long-haul process, retelling the same message or a ‘drip-drip-drip’ approach. It must be recognised that the ‘long haul’ may be inconsistent with the short-term political cycle within which key political players can change.

“I was involved in the Children’s Commissioner legislation and had dealings with NGOs in the children sector (Children’s Law Centre, Early Years, NSPCC, Barnardo’s and others). They were very professional, well run, effective and articulate in expressing their views. The NGOs had been developing evidence based policies for some years and arguing very cogently for this particular policy development and we as officials had to catch-up.

They were successful in influencing the policy agenda via a number of individual MLAs and particularly the SDLP which took that agenda on board and ran with it. Their success was that they built a coalition of NGOs large and small (about 14 groups) and realised that one NGO has little capacity to influence but acting together they were effective. They had to hammer their message home for a number of years but it was successful and for them has pointed the way ahead.” (Civil Servant)

- 15.7 Evidence:** The importance of evidence in lobbying for social justice cannot be under-estimated but it must be seen as part of a wider strategy – a necessary but insufficient pre-requisite for successful lobbying. There are two important questions here. First, what constitutes ‘evidence’ and second, how is it communicated? Politicians are particularly sensitive to public opinion however that is expressed, hence ‘evidence’ for them can come in the shape of topics discussed on the Stephen Nolan radio/TV show, a populist discussion of current issues, through to organisations appearing before statutory committees of the Assembly with well-researched arguments. What is clear however is that evidence needs to be communicated to decision-makers (whether elected representatives or officials) in more imaginative ways to capture their attention. Long detailed research reports, however robust, are unlikely to impact on decision makers who are already submerged in paperwork. Rigorous research must therefore provide the necessary underpinnings for a more succinct and stylized message to decision makers. Evidence also needs to be timely. Responding to topical policy issues demands a fast turnaround which can pose problems for the rigour of research. Politicians welcomed NGO and other independent research evidence as an alternative source of advice to that available via civil servants/government departments.

“The pressure point for effecting major social change is public opinion. Politicians are generally good at detecting public opinion and are sensitive to it – they would commit political suicide by ignoring it. They are also good at detecting the difference between messages espoused by a handful of activists as opposed to a groundswell of public opinion. Hence politicians sat up and took note of the campaign organized by age sector about winter fuel payments – older people are consistent voters and have political influence. Major policy change is effected by: gathering evidence of the need for change; communicating the evidence along with a strategy for policy change arrived at through a consensus among key stakeholders; and reaching a tipping-point where change becomes necessary.” (Politician)

15.8 Accountability and Rights: Lobby groups could better exploit existing and emerging accountability mechanisms and human rights treaties to which the UK government is a signatory. The range of accountability mechanisms is wide and the scope for holding public bodies to account extensive. This can include such things as monitoring the delivery of government departments against public service agreement targets in the Programme for Government, through their statutory obligations under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, to strategic litigation via judicial review of departmental/ministerial decisions. In other words NGOs can overlook ways of calling government (or duty-bearers) to account for their existing performance. There are legal, administrative and political accountability mechanisms which could better promote social justice goals if vigorously pursued by lobby groups. Public bodies are sometimes complacent in their responsibilities – challenge can provide a very effective way of focusing the mind. If the Assembly is deemed to be under-performing in public policy delivery as reported in this research, then accountability becomes an important way to tackle this. Lobbying in Northern Ireland was described as limited until fairly recently because the policy agenda was dominated by two major issues: conflict resolution and high levels of unemployment. Post conflict other issues have begun to emerge.

“Advocating for social change is a long hard slog. There are no overnight success stories. Social change comes slowly and requires persistence by advocates who need to be wary of a government strategy as the official response to their demands. The plague in Northern Ireland has been launching strategies. Northern Ireland used to have a reputation for launching ships, now we launch strategies! Civil servants are good at developing policy options, announcing a consultation process and developing a strategy on the back of this, all of which takes an inordinate amount of time. The challenge however is trying to ensure the strategy is implemented. Public bureaucracies have a great potential just simply to absorb things, tick boxes and make it seem like change is happening (e.g PAFT and section 75). And even when senior civil servants are signed up to these strategies there are many gatekeepers at middle management level who can thwart implementation.” (NGO leader)

15.9 Professional lobbyists: The role of professional lobbyists is still under-developed in Northern Ireland by comparison with Westminster or Washington. Politicians and officials in this research seemed to prefer groups advocating on their own behalf because they did so with the conviction for their cause and were more effective as a result. More generally, lobbying and advocacy by groups built sustainable capacity which could be improved upon over time and created a sense of empowerment amongst the key actors. This speaks to the need for building advocacy skills within organisations and providing them with mechanisms to judge the success of their advocacy efforts, two issues dealt with in this report.

“Hired lobbyists can have a limited influence on the policy agenda, in my view. What we are seeing is a definite increase in the number of UK regional NGOs or bodies representing professions which now have local lobbyists in recognition of the need to advocate their case to local politicians in a devolved Assembly. Dealing with lobbyists is a relatively new thing for us. We are simply not used to having lobbyists advocating directly to politicians and paying less attention to officials than might be expected.” (Civil Servant)

15.10 The lobbyists and the lobbied: By way of conclusion, it seems sensible to set out in summary form the views of: lobbyists (evidence extracted from the seven case studies above); those who are lobbied (politicians and civil servants); and the barriers identified to successful lobbying – see tables 15.1 & 15.2.

Table 15.1 Advocacy Success Factors

Views from the lobbyists	Views from the lobbied
The credibility or reputation of an organisation at the vanguard of promoting social change is paramount.	Exploit access to ministers, MLAs and local councillors, a number of whom ‘double-job’ (dual mandate) as Assembly members.
The recently formed lobbying forums (NICVA) may offer a central mechanism for shared advocacy learning and dissemination of good practice.	Lobby issues can become contentious, even innocuous matters. Recognise the complexities and slowness of power-sharing and the need to secure the support of the two main parties. Special advisors are very influential.
Strive to achieve a ‘tipping point’ where advocacy efforts have been sufficiently effective that government departments see the need to mainstream the work.	Where public policy issues are non-contentious, statutory committees of the Assembly can become a key source of influence. In addition, recognise the potential for: - cross border policy transfer - other devolved regions - no-day motions in the Assembly.
‘Make yourselves useful’ to elected representatives and officials – a working partnership arrangement of sorts.	Opportunities for lobby groups to inject new thinking into the public policy agenda which has so far been driven by a populist Executive approach.
Personalities and relationship building matter. Civil servants, long entrenched in policy and practice under Direct Rule arrangements, can be shifted with the ‘right chemistry’. Key influencers (high profile personalities or external sources) are an important advocacy tool used in promoting social change.	Civil servants continue to have a significant influence on how policy happens although perhaps less on what – don’t ignore them under devolved government.
Partnership arrangements between like-minded organisations promoting a sector or target group (from different perspectives) strengthen the prospects of successful advocacy.	Groups working in the same broad sector need to find common cause if they are to be successful advocates for social justice. Individual effort, however well-planned, will be much less effective than a well-managed coalition pushing a single message.
Evidence/data gathering offered a potential tool for promoting social change – the more robust, the better.	The importance of evidence in lobbying for social justice cannot be under-estimated but it must be seen as part of a wider strategy – a necessary but insufficient pre-requisite for successful lobbying.
The generation of human rights indicators provide a powerful mechanism to hold duty bearers to account in a very explicit way and offer the prospect of expanding this process in the most important facets of people’s lives.	Lobby groups could better exploit existing and emerging accountability mechanisms and human rights treaties to which the UK government is a signatory. The range of accountability mechanisms is wide and the scope for holding public bodies to account extensive.
The use of bottom-up advocacy can be powerful and provide a real legitimacy for the social change espoused.	Preference expressed for groups advocating on their own behalf because they did so with the conviction for their cause and are more effective as a result.

Table 15.2: Barriers to Successful Advocacy

Identified barriers to successful advocacy	Commentary
<p>Officials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small civil service/policy community can act as a deterrent to social change, particularly if officials see career consequences ▪ Senior civil servants in key positions held over a long period can stymie change which they do not personally agree with – the legacy of ‘direct rule’ government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministers and policy advisors offer another route to social change although civil servants are ultimately responsible for policy implementation and need to be kept ‘on board’ ▪ More direct lobbying of ministers, MLAs and political advisors
<p>Functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some functional areas of interest to Atlantic grantees still remain ‘reserved matters’ - immigration, policing and justice. Northern Ireland Office functions are harder to influence ▪ Civil servants still prone to ‘read across’ legislative and policy framework from Westminster without adaptation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Target Northern Ireland’s MPs as a potential source of lobbying and influence on reserved matters ▪ Need to highlight specific examples where civil servants have adopted <i>laissez faire</i> approach to ‘read across’ and lobby for NI-specific policy changes
<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The capacity of politicians and officials to ignore robust evidence – examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support for <i>A Shared Future</i> - research on financial cost of Northern Ireland divide (Deloitte study) - Atlantic’s deliberative poll in Omagh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Robust evidence, of itself, is necessary but insufficient in creating social change ▪ Evidence must become part of a more concerted campaign to advocate and lobby for changes in public policy
<p>Politicisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a tendency to politicise the social justice agenda in Northern Ireland and, as a result, to reinforce divisions between nationalists and unionists over key policy debates on the Bill of Rights and Single Equality Bill which can impede social change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Atlantic grantees have, in some cases, successfully circumvented the politics of social change by maintaining a focus on the outworkings of their projects. They have translated the language of equality and human rights into the daily lives of people, depoliticised the agenda, and convinced politicians of the merits of their activities
<p>Legislation and decision making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislative passage in the Assembly is a slow process and aspects of social change which require amendments or new laws take a long time to effect ▪ The decision making process in the Assembly is also slow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Assembly has been criticised for having made limited legislative progress. As stability of the institutions embeds, statutory committees will over time increase the pace of legislative reform ▪ The achievements of the Assembly have, so far, been populist in nature – delayed implementation of water charges, freezing the regional rate, and free transport for 60+. The mechanisms for reaching key decisions have been challenged by the DUP and their opposition to mutual veto highlighted. Power sharing safeguards have undoubtedly caused the Executive and Assembly to make limited progress on ‘wicked’ public policy issues
<p>Fragmented government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of joined-up government is a barrier to successful advocacy. This is particularly true of policy issues supported by Atlantic which straddle a number of government departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The increased number of government departments from 6 to 11 has been as a result of the move to devolved government and the need to share out ministerial positions. ▪ With increasing pressure on public expenditure, the Executive and Assembly will be forced to examine the top-heavy structures of the civil service. The DUP has already put forward proposals to cut the number of departments.

16. Conclusions

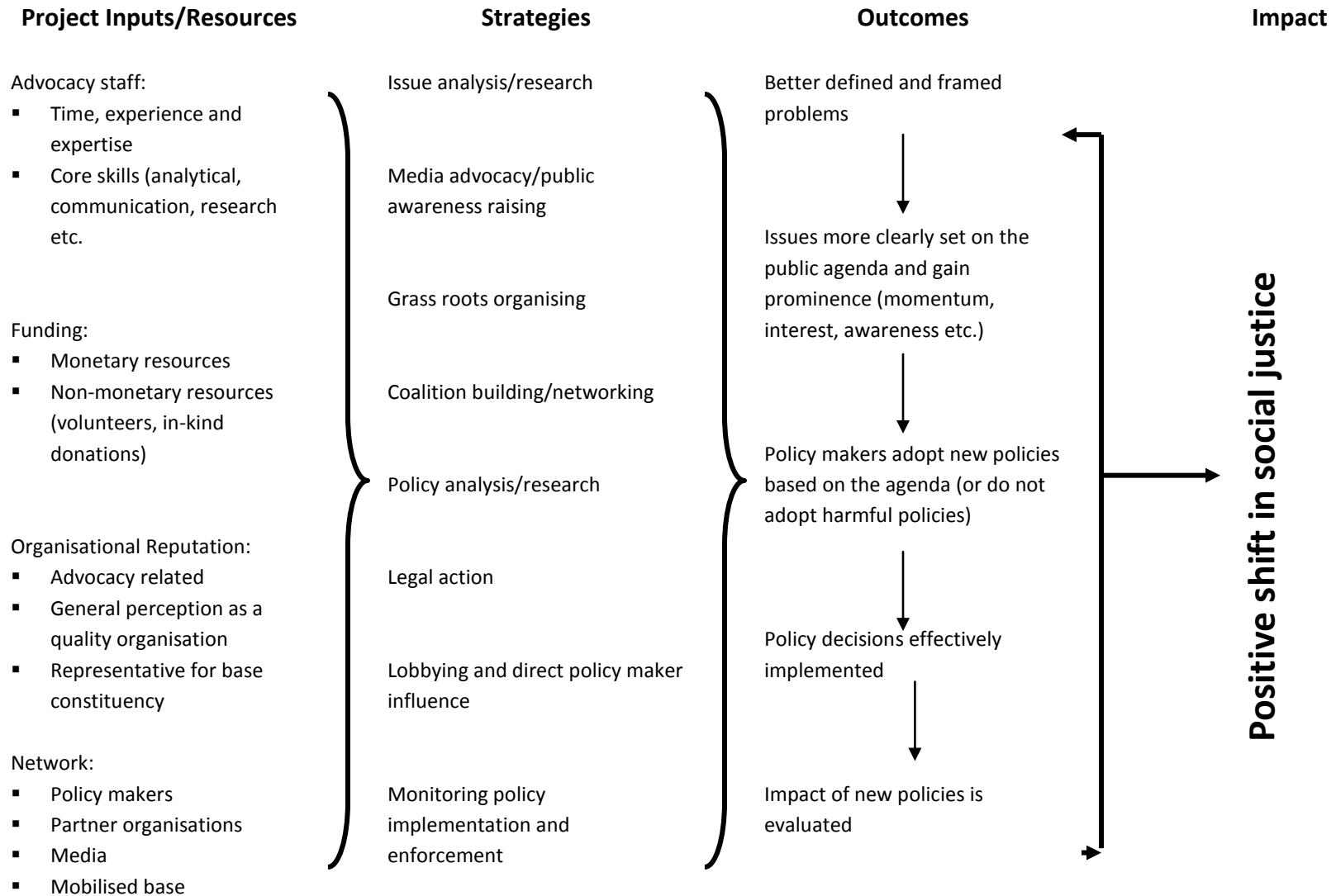
- 16.1 It has become clear during the course of research for this project that policy advocacy is not well understood by all groups in Northern Ireland involved in the delivery of social justice goals. This does **not** mean that they have been ineffective advocates, but rather that their efforts have been spontaneous, based on trial-and-error, and perhaps unaware of the range of advocacy tools available to them. In short, advocacy ‘campaigns’ if this isn’t to over-claim, have been rather unplanned and reactive. Given the importance of advocacy to the goals of The Atlantic Philanthropies and their centrality to the logic model used to fund projects, we offer some guidance on how efforts to promote social justice could be better focussed.
- 16.2 One way of doing this is to develop a plan of the various stages of an advocacy strategy and then track progress towards the attainment of final logic model outcomes. To do this, an American model entitled *Advocacy Progress Planner* is offered here as a tool for consideration by groups involved in social justice advocacy¹⁸. Accepting that the American context is very different from advocating in Northern Ireland, the dissemination of this research will include interactive sessions on the detail and population of the model.
- 16.3 We conclude this report therefore with 3 appendices:
- (a) A diagram which illustrates the advocacy process in summary form (appendix 1) – source: adapted from The California Endowment Framework for Advocacy.
 - (b) A description of the key components of the *Advocacy Progress Planner* (appendix 2) – source: Harvard Family Research Project; California Endowment; The Atlantic Philanthropies; and Annie E. Casey Foundation.
 - (c) A paper (as opposed to on-line) version of the planner which follows the sequence of populating the model by way of example (appendix 3).

¹⁸ <http://www.planning.continuousprogress.org/>

APPENDIX 1

THE ADVOCACY PROCESS: OVERVIEW

THE ADVOCACY PROCESS

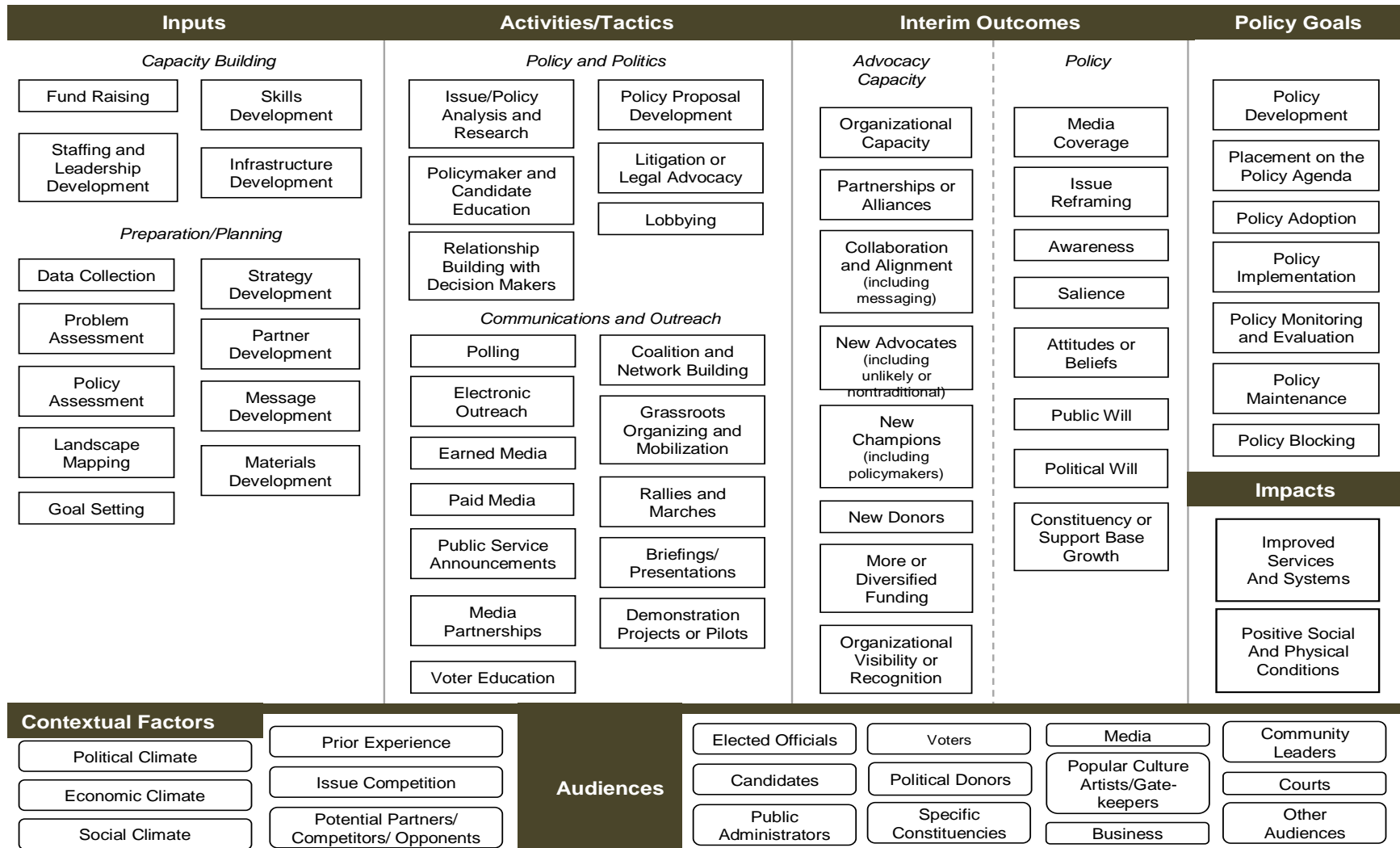


APPENDIX 2

DEVELOPING AN ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Advocacy Progress Planner – an overview

Advocacy and Policy Change Composite Logic Model



USING THE ADVOCACY PROGRESS PLANNER¹⁹

1. Here are some notes which help to explain the key elements of the *Advocacy Progress Planner* (in paper format). The *Advocacy Progress Planner* is a composite logic model which can be used to help advocates, funders, and evaluators articulate an advocacy or policy change strategy or theory of change. There is also an on-line interactive version which can be populated using information from your project:
<http://www.planning.continuousprogress.org/>
2. The on-line tool is designed to give you and your team an at-a-glance look at the ingredients of advocacy efforts. It can guide you to clarify the elements of your own campaign: goals and impacts; audience; what you bring to your campaign; the activities and tactics you're planning for; and benchmarks along the way to your goals. As you click on your choices in each area, you will see your campaign strategy come into focus. And you'll get some clues about how to gauge your progress and make improvements
3. The eight questions below guide users on how to use the model.

3.1 **What is the advocacy or policy change goal?**

Start by defining what, in the end, the advocacy strategy is trying to achieve. For many strategies, the goal(s) will be found in the model's last two columns - *policy goals* and *impacts* (pick boxes in each column if relevant). However, some strategies might aim for goals in the *interim outcomes* column, (e.g., the end goal is increasing the awareness or salience of a policy issue or developing a network of new advocates that can be called on to advocate when a policy window opens).

When considering this question, think about where the issue currently stands in the policy process. If it is early on, the goal may be raising awareness of the problem that needs to be addressed (an interim outcome on the model). Alternatively, the problem may already be known and the goal is developing a solution and getting that solution adopted as policy. Or, the policy may already exist and the goal is making sure it is implemented correctly and is having its intended impact.

3.2 **Who is the audience?**

The model's bottom right corner offers potential *audiences*. Select the audience(s) that the strategy needs to reach to achieve its goal(s). Think both about who needs to be part of the advocacy effort and which decision makers need to be convinced in order to achieve the strategy's goal. Most strategies will target multiple audiences.

¹⁹ The composite logic model was developed by Julia Coffman from Harvard Family Research Project;; Astrid Hendricks and Barbara Masters from The California Endowment; Jackie Williams Kaye from The Atlantic Philanthropies; and Tom Kelly from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

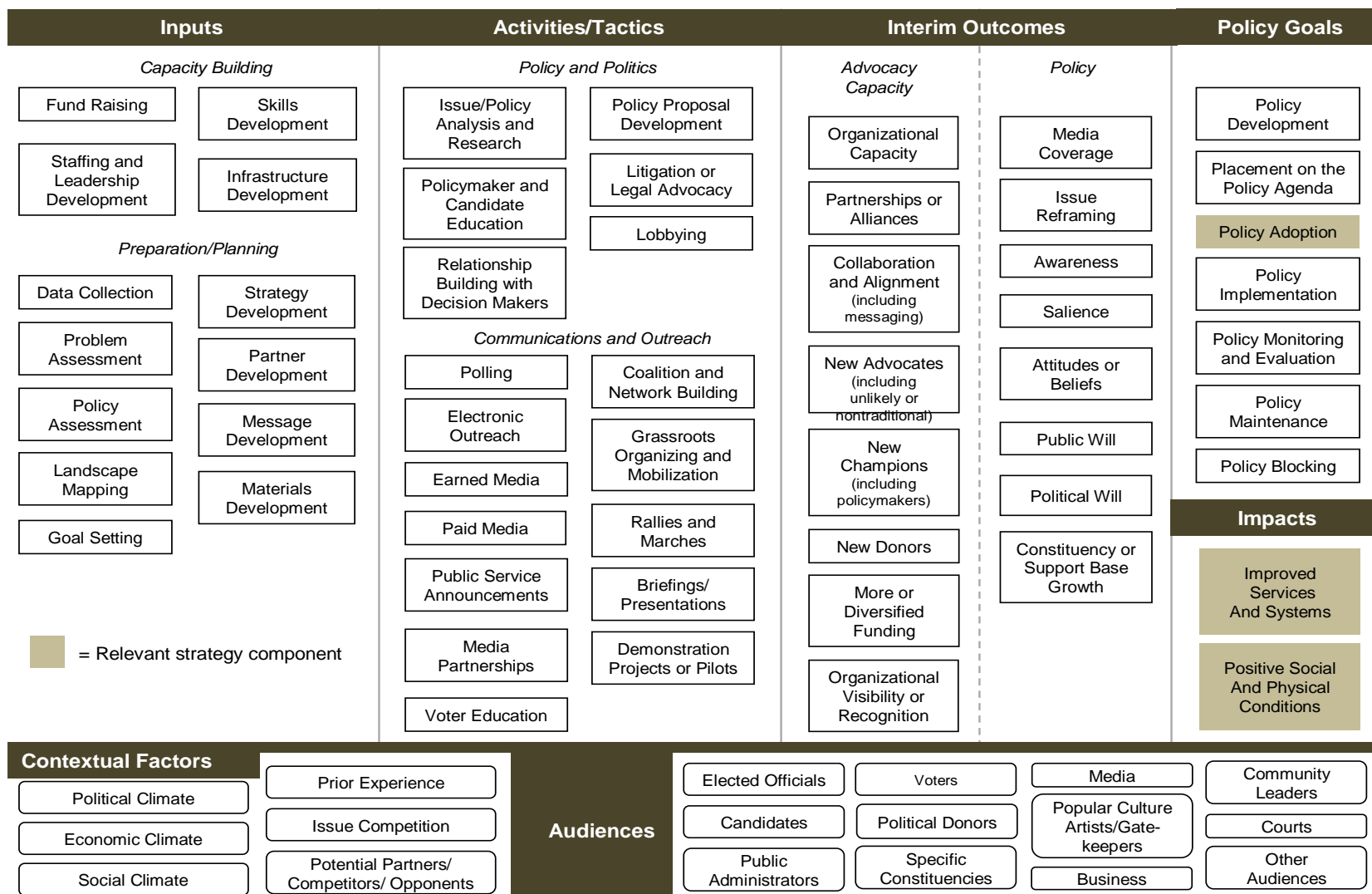
- 3.3 **What will it take to convince or move the audience?**
Consider the *inputs*, *activities*, and *interim outcomes* in the composite logic model. What do those involved in the advocacy or policy change effort need to do to move the strategy's audience and achieve its goal? Select components in each column to illustrate how the strategy will achieve change. In the *inputs* column, select the steps or components that are necessary to prepare for the strategy's implementation. In the *activities* column, select the components involved in the strategy's implementation. In the *interim outcomes* category, select the outcomes that are necessary to achieve before the end goal can be accomplished. Note that there may be an order or sequence to the interim outcomes (e.g., it may be necessary to get new advocates involved in the effort and acting as spokespersons before sufficient media coverage can be achieved).
- 3.4 **What contextual factors might affect the strategy's success?**
Think about the factors that are not controllable but that may impact the strategy's success and therefore are important to keep in mind. The model's bottom left corner offers potential contextual factors.
- 3.5 **Where doesn't the strategy need to focus?**
Consider whether there are *inputs*, *activities*, or *outcomes* on the model that are already in place and either don't have to be built (but can be leveraged), or are not relevant to the strategy. Keep in mind that some model components that are not selected may still be relevant (e.g., the strategy may result in some unanticipated outcomes). Identify components that are known to exist already or that definitely will not be a strategy focus. For example, among the interim outcomes, awareness about an issue or problem may already be high and therefore not a focus; the challenge instead will be increasing the audience's perception of its salience.
- 3.6 **What will strategy collaborators do?**
One advantage of the composite logic model is that it identifies a full range of possible advocacy activities and outcomes. As a result, it can be used to identify where other organizations or collaborators are positioned and how they complement the strategy. Identifying collaborators' positioning puts the strategy in context and shows where and how it will add value. It also illustrates potential points of synergy and collaboration that might not already exist.
- 3.7 **What will the opposition or competition do?**
Think about how the opposition is positioned. Consider whether counteractions are necessary, particularly where there is activity or outcome overlap. For example, if the opposition has a media strategy, consider potential audience reactions to competing messages and how to frame messages accordingly.
- 3.8. **Is there a contingency plan?**
If relevant, identify alternative paths to the end goal if the current strategy is not successful. Consider which components in the model will signal if the strategy is not working. For example, if the strategy is not successful in generating

policymaker champions using one-on-one briefings with those policymakers, it may be necessary to build a larger cadre of advocates at the local level who will demonstrate demand and make a grassroots case for change.

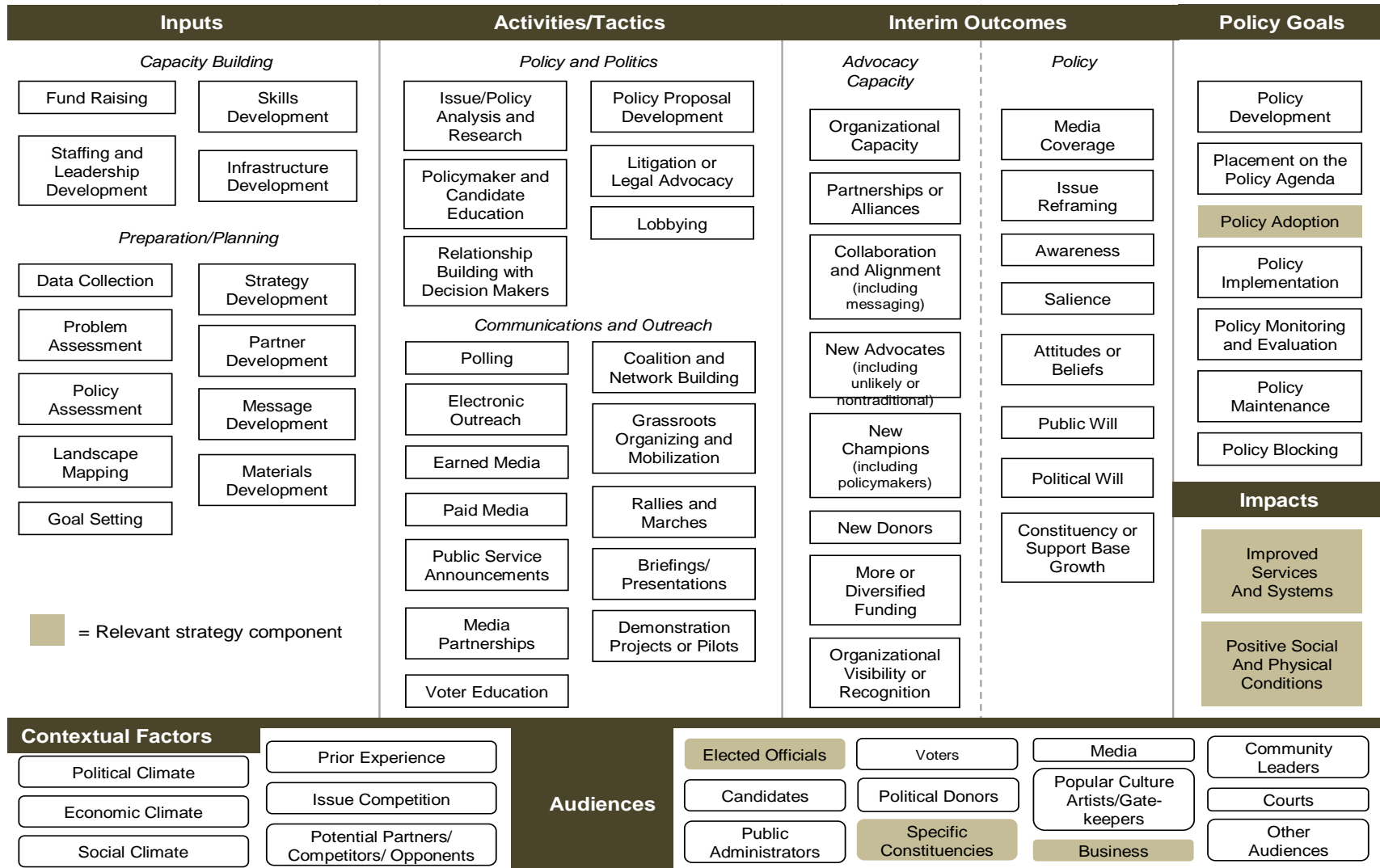
APPENDIX 3

Advocacy Progress Planner – populating the model

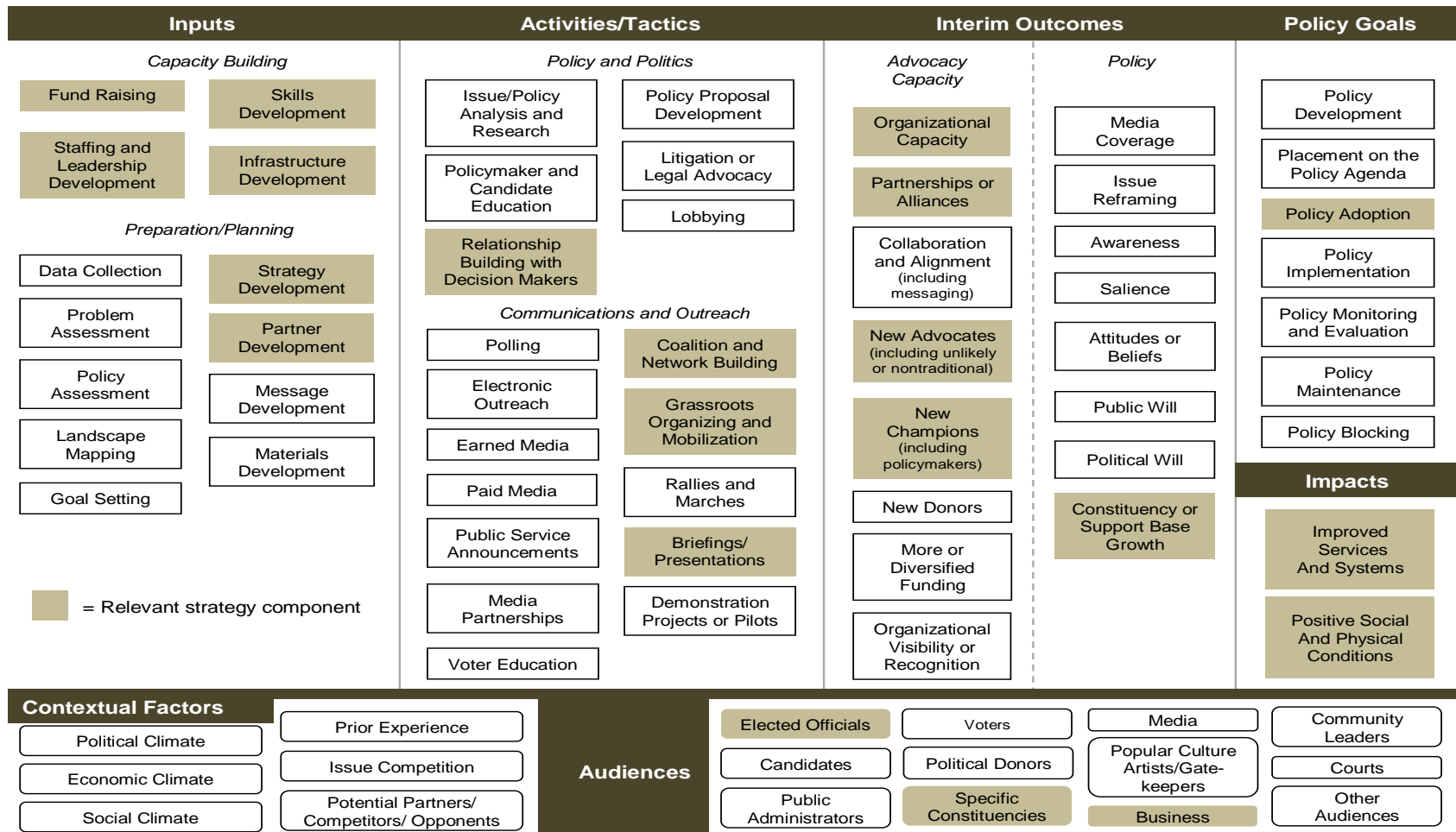
1 What is the Advocacy Goal?



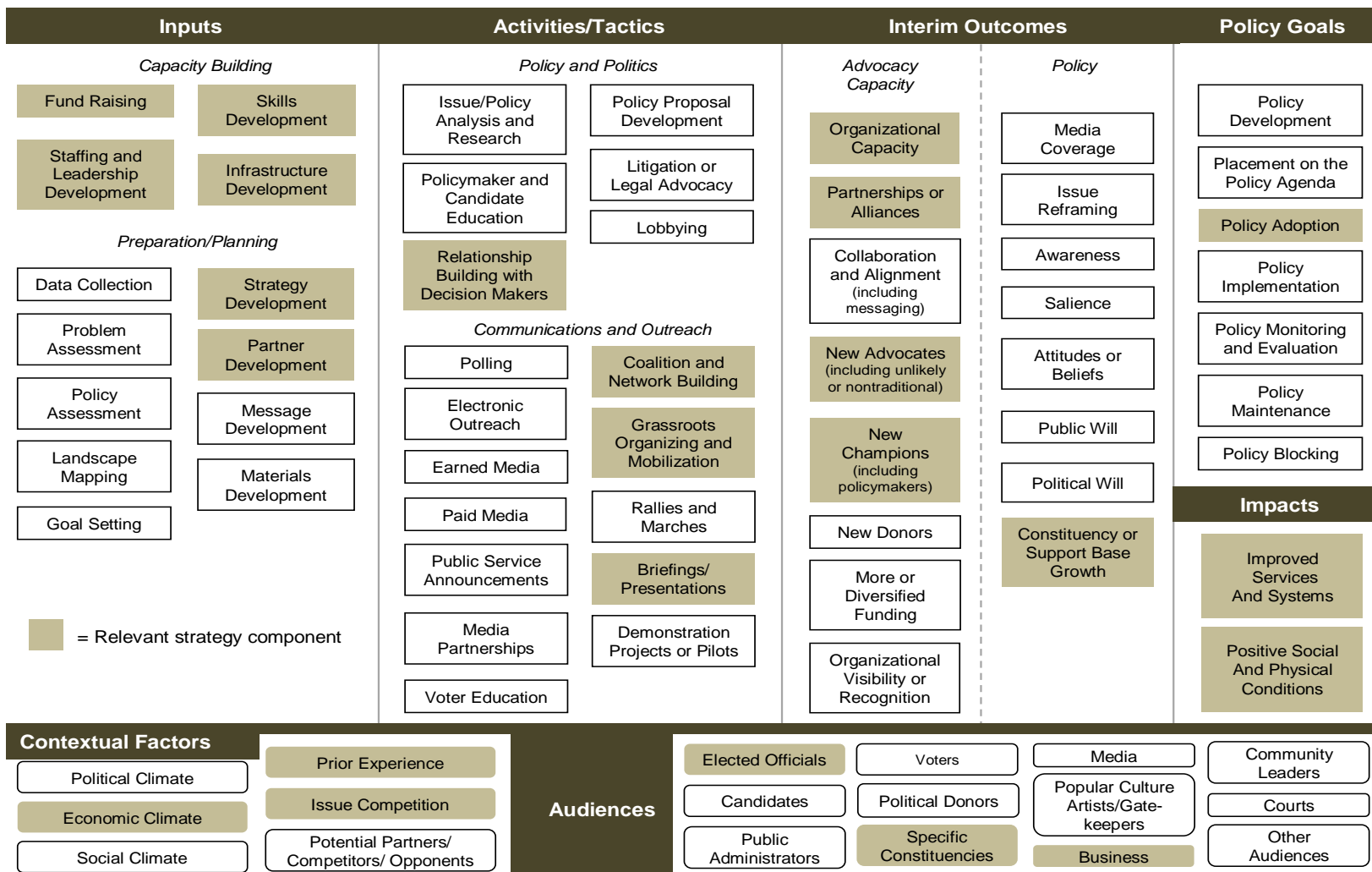
② Who is the Audience?



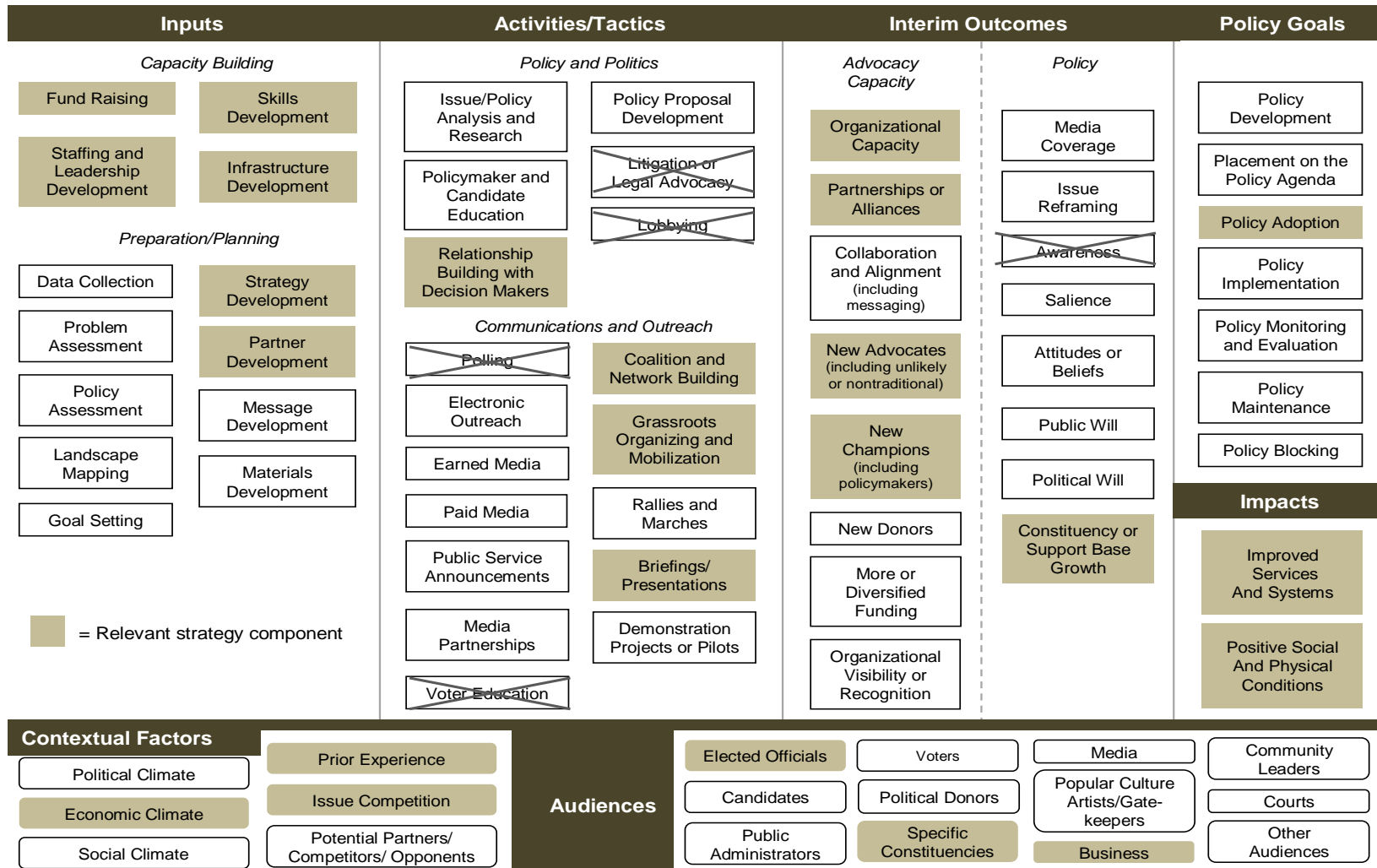
③ What Will it take to Convince or Move the Audience?



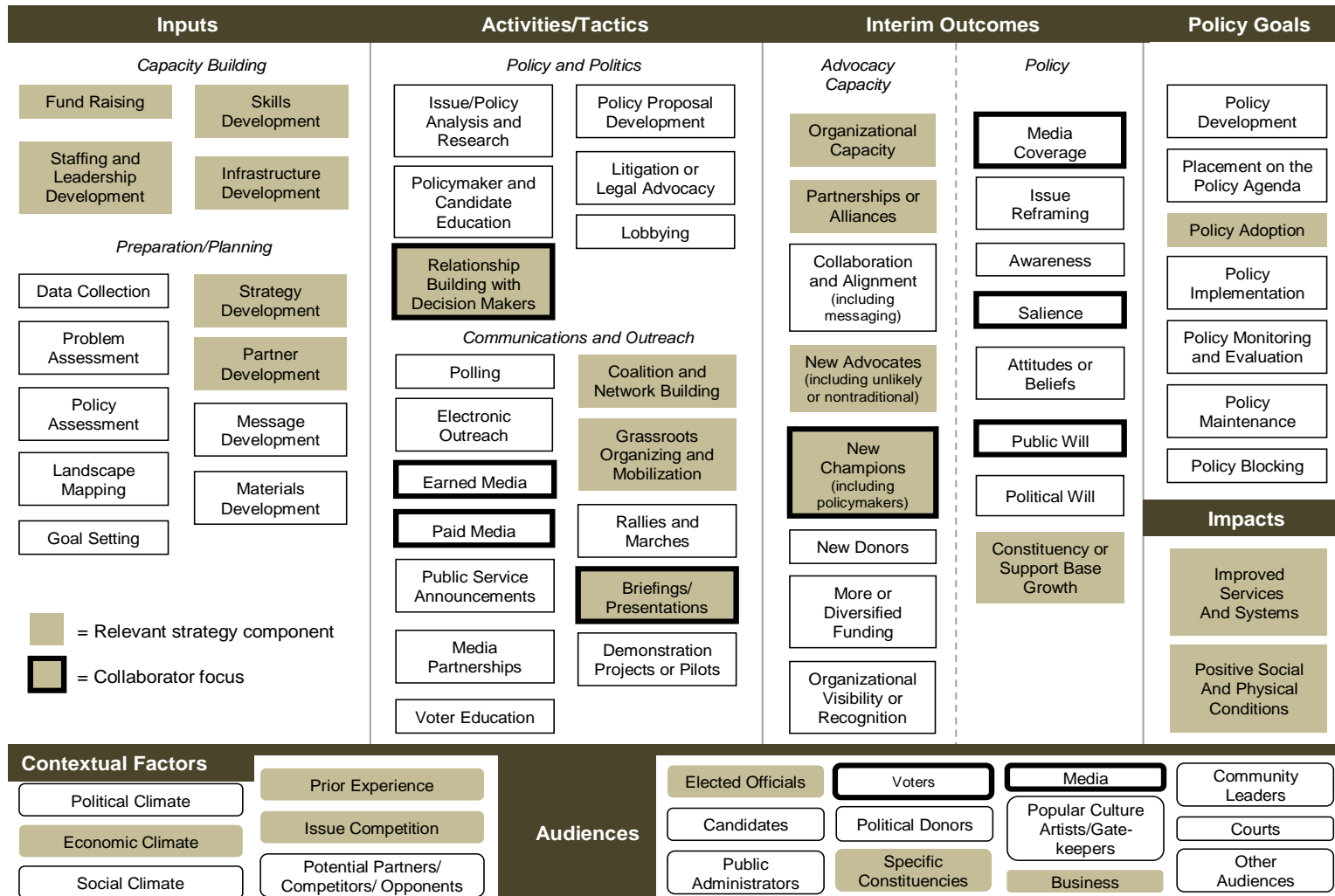
④ What Contextual Factors Might Impact the Strategy's Success?



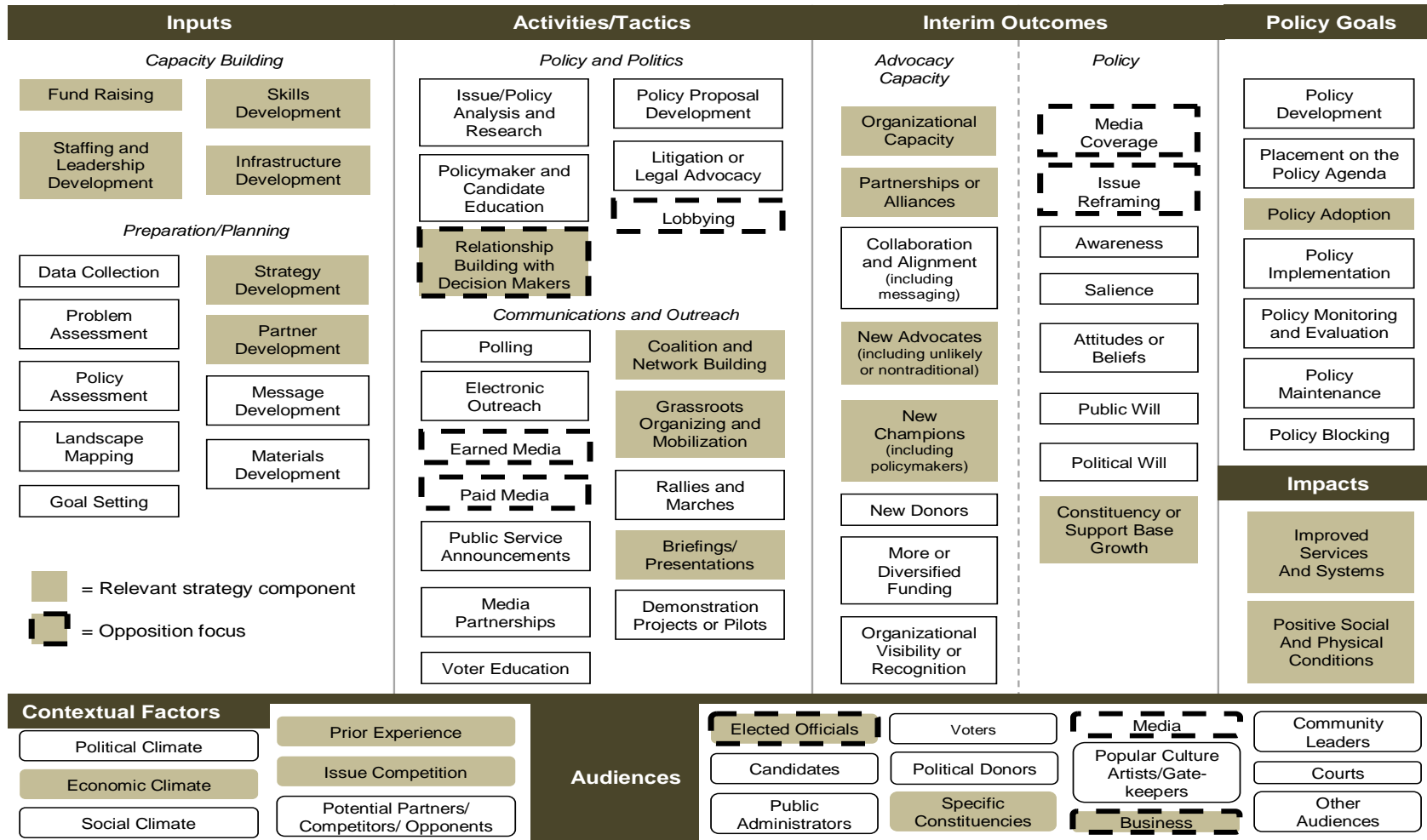
5 Where Doesn't the Strategy Need to Focus?



⑥ What Will Strategy Collaborators Do?



7 What will the Opposition or Competition Do?



8 Is There a Contingency Plan?

