

COALITIONS *as a* TOOL *for* ADVOCACY

Evidence and Lessons Learned

An Evaluation Report for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

tccGROUP



ARCH Sustainability
Planning Learning Collaborative

#2. Foundation of Sustainability
Collaborative Partnersh

7. Foundation of Sustainability
Outreach, Education, and Advocacy

+ *Leadership;*
Diversified and leveraged resources; and
Performance Measurement, Process, and Outcome Evaluation



COALITIONS *as a* TOOL *for* ADVOCACY

Evidence and Lessons Learned



Coalitions
as a Tool for
Advocacy
Evidence and
Lessons Learned

An Evaluation Report for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Detailed Coalition Effectiveness Framework

<p>Coalition Capacity & Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values play an important part in determining the "right" coalition model. • Coalition models exist based on purpose, leadership structure, or, increasingly, a multi-pronged hybrid. • Setting the advocacy agenda should be secondary to alignment on mission and values. If done as a strategic effort, setting the advocacy agenda within a coalition represents a significant outcome because it represents resolution of some issues necessary for alignment. • It is generally most effective to have a broader process for setting the advocacy agenda coupled with a narrower process to set strategy towards the agenda. 	<p>Coalition Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member trust and alignment are essential for coalition partners to come together, especially when working with nontraditional partners. • Members within coalitions of nontraditional partners must be prepared to accept incremental change as a cost of coalition membership. • Bringing in partners with opposing views may directly and indirectly undermine effectiveness when competing priorities of individual organizations rise to the surface. • Coalitions of partners with opposing views work best for discrete, immediate issues.
<p>EFFECTIVE POSITIONING</p>	
<p>Coalition Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsurprisingly, multi-year general operating support is seen as the best tool to allow coalitions needed flexibility in their work. • Funders need to balance providing strategic insight with directing strategy. • Power dynamics are such that many coalitions feel they cannot turn down any type of funder request. • Benefits of funder collaboratives include risk mitigation for the involved funders. 	<p>Coalition Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalitions can demonstrate their relevancy by highlighting how their issue affects multiple stakeholder groups. • Coalitions need to both manage the membership balance for diversity on the political spectrum and understand how to leverage those voices. • Coalitions that lack the infrastructure or trust to share intelligence are hampering their own effectiveness. • Branding can be helpful but must be backed by a strong reputation. • The current environment is well suited to coalition work due to the need to incorporate different skills, perspectives, and relationships. • Coalitions can serve as a way to grow and develop newer and smaller organizations and strengthen the pipeline of advocates.

COALITIONS *as a* TOOL *for* ADVOCACY

Simplified Coalition Effectiveness Framework

1. Coalition Capacity & Structure
2. Coalition Context
3. Coalition Strategy
4. Coalition Support

<https://www.tccgrp.com/wp-content/uploads/Coalitions-Tool-for-Advocacy-Gates-FINAL-10.29.21>

1. Coalition Capacity & Structure

- What types of support does a coalition need during different phases of the life of a coalition? What is important, and when?
- Is the membership model outdated?
- What are different coalition models?
- How rigid should coalition advocacy agendas be at formation?
- How should coalitions best make decisions about when coalition strategy should be altered?

1. Coalition Capacity & Structure

Highlighted findings from the evaluation

- Lifecycle is not a good frame for determining coalition support; instead, use
 - the planned lifespan of the coalition (*event coalitions vs enduring coalitions*),
 - individual coalition members' roles (*core members, players, and tag-alongs*), and
 - the policy life cycle to determine coalition needs.
- Equity support cannot be an afterthought, and investing to help build and position organizations representing historically marginalized populations is important so that their participation in coalitions is not token.
- All coalitions benefit from support to build their capacities in communications and advocacy strategy.
- Coalitions need transition support as an issue moves from policy formation/passage towards implementation.
- The membership model remains a powerful and effective coalition model, particularly for coalitions that expect to exist in perpetuity under a large issue umbrella.
- Turning over all tasks and responsibilities to staff at member-model coalitions reduces the effectiveness of the coalition model — a clear active role for members is important.
- The membership model is less efficient when the advocacy issue is very narrow in scope or where the solution is particularly technical and uncontroversial.

2. Coalition Context

- How do non-profits best establish coalitions with non-traditional partners?
- What are the effects of working with non-traditional partners (coalition membership, leadership, and communication; capacities and issues related to measurement, learning, and evaluation, etc.)?
- What are the trade-offs of bringing in partners who have opposing views on some issues?

3. Coalition Strategy

- What key decision criteria should be considered for using coalition building as an advocacy tactic?
- What tactics complement coalition building in different scenarios?
- What measurement frameworks are being used to assess the effectiveness of different types of coalitions?
- When is it helpful to “brand” a coalition as a formal entity versus having a set of coordinated groups branded independently?
- Is the coalition concept relevant in today’s political environment?

4. Coalition Support

- What factors contribute to healthy dynamics in funder-coalition relationships?
- What factors should be taken into consideration when deciding to end funding to a coalition?
- Do coalitions that have been supercharged by a funder run into risks compared to those coalitions that have grown organically?
- When is it helpful to fund collaboratively with other foundations and donors?

Legislative Advocacy Work: Two Tactics

Public Mobilization and Decision-Maker Engagement

“In almost every other winning modern societal change we studied, grassroots activism played the key role...Conversely the causes that are faltering in the early 21st century can attribute their struggles in some part to weak or uneven grassroots efforts.”

- Leslie Crutchfield, *How Change Happens*, pp.23-24 (2018)

For More Information



Susan Janko Summers

ARCH Consultant

sjsummers@archrespite.org

ARCH National Respite Network
and Resource Center

<http://www.archrespite.org>

Prepared for the Sustainability Planning Learning Collaborative

Lifespan Respite Technical Assistance Center

This project was supported, in part by grant number 90LRLT0001, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration for Community Living policy.

