ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN POLICY ENGAGEMENT

JACK GILLUM
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TRUST

About Jack Gillum

Jack Gillum is currently a Trustee and a Director of The Campaign for the Children and Young People Assembly for Wales (Funky Dragon) which has a mission to campaign for the creation of a national organisation which enables children and young people in Wales to get their voices heard by Government and others who make decisions about policies and services that affect their lives.

Further to this Jack is a Trustee of the Smart School Council Community (SSCC) which also has the mission to help young people to become active, democratic citizens which is implemented through giving young people the experience of democracy and developing new skills which are prevalent to being a modern-day citizen.

He has held several roles working with policy making and in that sector through being a Councillor on Knighton Town Council (2015 – 2017), the Welsh Representative on the UK Parliament and British Youth Council Youth Select Committee investigation into Votes@16 (2014 – 2015), a member of the Lifeskills by Barclays Youth Advisory Council and has been a long-term member of Powys Youth Forum.

Jack has experience with working with influencers in the political field through taking part in many election campaigns and working for a Member of Parliament in several roles.

Jack is currently in his third year studying Politics and International Relations at the University of Reading where he has taken a specific interest into the role of International Organisations in furthering important international issues.

Jack Gillum

Email: jackgillum@hotmail.com

www.jackgillum.co.uk

LinkedIn:
www.linkedin.com/in/jagillum

Twitter: @Gillum01

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/JAGillum

Acknowledgments

STAND Canada

Plan International Youth Advisory Board

The Students Commission

Foundation for the Study of Processes of Government in Canada (Forum for Young Canadians)

Ontario Youth Parliament

Action Canada

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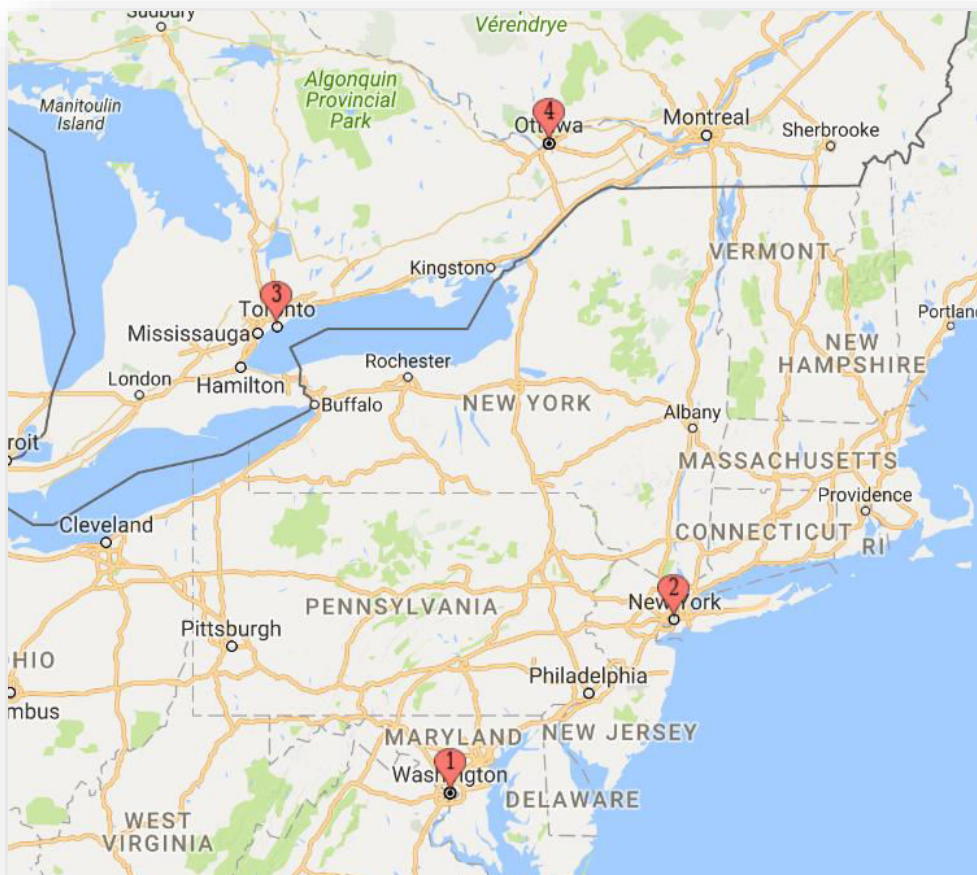
Glossary

WCMT – Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

CSO – Civil Society Organisation

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

UN – United Nations

UN ECOSOC – United Nations Economic and Social Council

UNCRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNHRC/ HRC – United Nations Human Rights Council

IO – International Organisation(s)

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Executive Summary

This research project is designed to investigate the role of civil society in the policy making process and the way that organisations can work to try and get a policy message heard.

In Chapter 1 it begins by discussing what civil society is accepting the broad definition as "the set of (1) organisations that (2) seek political influence, yet (3) have no interest in gaining executive or legislative power themselves." (Beyers, et al., 2008) rather than just independent individuals and go on to discuss the concept of the policy making cycle deciding that it is a general theoretical concept and to truly understand the process it is to understand that the process does not work as a cycle but more of multiple stages occurring at once. The concluding section of chapter one looks at the motivations for why civil society engage with decision makers and why decision makers engage with CSO with it being clear that it is because CSO is much closer to the people and tend to have a much greater knowledge hub on issues.

In Chapter 2 the movement is to focus on the methods which organisations use to engage with decision makers whether this is nationally or internationally being that there is an important need to raise the public profile of a campaign for it to receive traction and interest by decision makers. This is then followed by the idea that all the organisations work should be based on research as this then can be evidence of success and the correct ways items work.

In Chapter 3 the movement is to discuss the role specifically which young people play in the policy making process. It was quite clear throughout the research that there is no one decided way for youth engagement and every organisation carries out it works differently with a different level of success. Though what is important to note is that there was an overall agreed age that youth participation is higher than 18 and is more likely to reach the age of 25. What was sadly quite clear in this section was that the locations visited do not really allow for much further knowledge about the experience of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has as while it is said to be important there is no examples of where it has directly affected their work of influenced further thinking.

Finally, in Chapter 4 a specific movement is made to look at the challenges which civil society organisations face in carrying out their work nationally and internationally. This has a specific notice that on the international scene there are serious issues of the over politicisation of civil society space which has led to states restricting organisations access to IOs. When the movement is made to national based organisation and movement other forms of challenges appear such as funding cuts and an increase level of authoritarian rule which has led to a level of distrust in the work of organisations.

This report has come to a position where there are still many more questions to be answered which a large amount of this is due to the difficulty in measuring impact of their 'lobbying' but also because institutions are still closed on the way that they work and around civil society questions.

Recommendations

- For a 'knowledge hub' to be created to support, share and publish, all organisation size, research for it to gain further traction.
- For enhancements to be made of CSO using innovative technology (such as VR) to promote their agenda and to gain wider interest in the topic.
- For the UK Government to consider and investigate ways of increasing the level of citizen and youth voices in its work with International Organisations. (e.g. through full commitment to the Youth Delegate Programme)
- For the Government to investigate ways that Civil Servants can be utilised to support youth understanding and engagement in the policy process.
- For institutions to provide information about their working practices in an open environment so that organisations are of the best ways to engage with those bodies.

Introduction to the Project

Background

While there are the international pressures on civil society participation which will be discussed later in this report, the main background about this research project is on the national basis of work within in the United Kingdom and the authors personal experience of working with policy makers.

The first reason for why this research project was initiated as due to the funding removal and the subsequent closure of Funky Dragon, the former Children and Young People Assembly for Wales. (BBC, 2014) The closure of Funky Dragon left Wales as the only country in Europe without an independent national youth voice platform. The position supporting the need for a youth assembly or a Youth Parliament for Wales have been discussed within the sector in Wales which included support by organisations such as the Electoral Reform Society which called for a Youth Assembly for Wales which is also accountable to the National Assembly for Wales to maintain its independence. (2015: 33). Furthermore, the need for a national body was identified to be a positive nature for Wales as "With the Donaldson review emphasising the role of citizenship in education, it is perverse that there is not a national elected Youth Assembly that joins up to participatory initiatives at the local level to likely developments in education." (ERS, 2015: 33) While many organisations supported the call for it there was also the recommendation from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child which called for the UK Government to "31(c) Expedite the establishment of youth parliaments in all devolved administrations and territories as permanent forums for children's effective engagement with national legislative processes on issues that affect them." (United Nations CRC, 2016: 7) This shows that there was the need to establish further understanding of national youth platforms from around the world.

As discussed earlier, due to the changing nature of domestic politics and the implications which this has on international politics there is an ever-closing Civil Society space and the participation of them in International Organisations (IO) so there is the need to be able find out about the challenges and ways of UK organisations best being able to work with IOs so that UK CSOs can best promote their issues to international decision makers.

Purpose and Objectives

The main purpose of this research project and this corresponding report is to understand and gain shared learning from other organisations and governments to be able to provide a few recommendations to United Kingdom based organisations so that there is the shared learning and methods of participation can be shown as being effective internationally. This would allow these methods to then be implemented in the UK with evidence backing the suggestion up.

The objectives which this research project have are:

1. Identify and Understand the challenges which each of these organisations or bodies face when planning and delivering the work which they do
2. Identify and Understand the exact role which young people have in the policy engagement cycle in these bodies.
3. Identify and Understand the motivation of CSOs (specifically involving young people) are involved in the policy engagement process

4. Identify best practice models of engagements under different circumstances such as budget constraints, distance covered, etc.
5. Understand the impact that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has on these bodies and the importance of using them in their work especially article 12 which is regarding children and young people having a voice on things which affect them.

Methodology

The methodology that was used in this research project was that of semi-structured interviews which were carried out with a range of stakeholders including politicians, state representatives, government departments, civil society groups, International Organisations and Youth Organisations.

The reason why semi-structured interviews were chosen as the method for this research project was that they allow 'several key points which help to define the areas to be explored but also gave the ability to explore an idea or response in more detail.' (Gill, et al., 2008) Furthermore, the reason why semi-structured were chosen rather that structured interviews were due to the need to be flexible as the participants may of thought there was some information which had a larger importance than was previously thought in the preparation of the interview. Most of the interviews conducted were carried out as one to one interviews which meant that there was less possibility of influence on answers even though this as not necessarily needed as the research was around collecting best practice and all ideas.

In June and July 2017, Jack travelled to the United States of America where he visited Washington DC and New York City and then to Canada where he visited Toronto and Ottawa, with each city providing its own reasoning for the visit. In total Jack travelled over 9,500 miles. During his time travelling, Jack wrote a blog which is available to read at www.jackagillum.wordpress.com

Washington DC was chosen as a location to carry out research was that it allowed to get an understanding of how CSO manage to engage with a federal system as this creates different challenges to participation. Additionally, Washington DC allowed access to other International Organisations (IO) such as the World Bank which carries out different activities and has different aims to other IOs so it allowed for a full understanding of different IOs.

New York City was chosen as a location to visit on the research trip was that the Headquarters of the United Nations is based in New York including many member states Permanent Missions. This was significant to the research project as there was a need to investigate civil society and youth participation at all levels of governance. This was also particularly important as NYC is the location of the main UN NGO Committee so to get a full understanding of the international work NYC was visited. It is also important to note that some effort was made to engage with states which may not be fully supportive of a strong civil society, however with many it was not possible or the invitation was not accepted. Due to the USA's political devolution of having Mayor's offices it allowed to see the different implications of politics within decision making and routes to access. With New York City having a much larger population than that of Wales it allowed to see how such a large city manage to focus on youth engagement activities with a diverse population.

A general purpose for choosing Canada was due to the international reputation afforded to Canada for their work on Youth Participation and International Advocacy. Toronto is for the first real in depth look at the role of young people as this part of the trip involved exploration and meetings with a range of youth organisations and their participation mechanisms. This allowed to gain a true understanding of the way that different models can be used to involve young people.

Finally, Ottawa was chosen as a location to visit on the research trip was to look at the national basis of CSO engagement with the Canadian Government and the Canadian Parliament as Canada has a very similar political structure as the United Kingdom. Based on the Canadian reputation for youth participation, Ottawa was chosen as this is the centre of the Canadian Government Participation movements and Open Government work so by visiting it allowed to get the best understanding of their work.

Report Overview

As this report has covered several different topics all of which do not flow directly in to one another, this report should be read as individual chapters and as sections as to what is of interest to the reader. However, chapter 1 will provide the main aspects of discussing civil society position so is useful reading.

This report will be looking at the civil society prospective and way of working on a local, national, regional and international basis working with a range of policy makers. There will also be a specific focus on the role of young people and the way that their voice is listened to by decision makers on areas which affect their life. Each chapter will be supported throughout by a number of case studies to show where there is real world action of the examples used. The chapters will be focusing on:

1. <u>What civil society is and the motivation</u> behind organisations to engage with policy makers and for policy makers to engage with them. This will both engage with ideas of campaign groups but also organisations which are involved with promoting youth voice.
2. The <u>methods </u>which civil society groups can use to engage with policy makers. This will specifically focus on broad civil society groups rather than specific ways in which young people engage as while there will be some cross over, the projects which were visited also provides their own examples of working in different and democratic ways.
3. <u>Understanding the role</u> of Young People in the policy making process and the <u>methods</u> which are used to engage with young people in order for them to have their voice heard. Within this chapter there will be discussion about <u>how important the UNCRC is</u> for these organisations work and more on the general perception of the UNCRC in those countries.
4. <u>Understanding the challenges</u> which civil society organisations face in engaging with policy makers and institutions. By looking at the challenges which organisations face it allows for some discussion around how organisations can innovate and long-term plan in order to continue their work.

CHAPTER 1: MOTIVATION

Chapter 1: What is a Civil Society Organisation and what is the motivation to engage with them in the Policy making process?

Introduction

This chapter introduces some of the key terminology and aspects of this research project. It will begin by exploring the concept of a Civil Society Organisation and how this is interchanged between different literature and with different organisations. Then this chapter will explore the policy making process to make sure that there is a full understanding about what is involved in the process so that a greater understanding is had when discussing the potential methods of engagement but then also why there is such a broad range of challenges which these organisations face when they are engaging with national, regional or international bodies. The concluding section of this chapter will then focus on one of the main aims of this report being the motivation for engagement as there is sometimes the question which is presented is regarding the motives to engaging organisations and a specific subset of them of those involving young people in the policy making process.

What is a Civil Society Organisation?

Within the civil society literature there is a large amount of discussion in regard to what a civil society organisation is and when the term should be used. Within this report the term civil society organisation will be used interchangeably with terms such as 'non-state actor', 'interest group' and 'non-governmental organisations'.

However, within the academic literature on this topic it is interesting to understand how "most scholars use the concept 'civil society organisation' as a way to emphasise the positive contribution that these non-state actors have on the functioning of International Organisations such as the WTO." (Hanegraaff, et al., 2011) This is a positive thing to note in this reports discussion as it should show's that the motivation of organisations to engage with these actors is generally as previous behaviour has been positive.

There are a number of definitions used in academic literature to describe civil society organisations with the most common being "the arena in which people come together to pursue the interests they hold in common – not for profit or political power, but because they care about something enough to take collective action." (Edwards, 1998) or with a slight adaption the working definition which CIVICUS use to describe CSO is "the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests." (2013; 10) with an addition being that "that citizen action should be voluntary, rather than through compulsion." (CIVICUS, 2013; 10)

What these definitions are showing the understanding of is that they are "the set of (1) organisations that (2) seek political influence, yet (3) have no interest in gaining executive or legislative power themselves." (Beyers, et al., 2008) For the understanding of using the term Civil Society Organisation that definition and factors is what will be used.

Finally, it is important to define the part of civil society work which will be focused on in this report as CS has been noted to carry out a range of tasks from "mediating, arbitrating, advocating, training, witness, supporter, counsellor and therapist" (Lewer, 1999) This basically boils down to the idea that civil society focus on advocacy, policy or carry out work such as they can be 'contracted' by IOs in order to do the work. This report will be focusing on the policy or advocacy work which CSO engage with.

Policy Making Process

While now there is an understanding of the term civil society and how it will be used interchangeably throughout this report it is also important to also understand what is meant in this report as the policy making process. When there is discussion about the policy making process, there is a discussion of the differences between the theory of the policy making process and comparing this to the real-world scenario of engagement. This has been supported through further research as "Most academics agree with this judgment, and in 1999 the Cabinet Office also explicitly rejected the use of policy cycles, on the basis that practitioners did not feel they accurately reflected the realities of policy making." (Hallsworth, et al., 2011)

However, the theoretical model of the policy making cycle proposes that there are four main stages to the process. The theory states that they are agenda building, formulation and adoption, implementation and evaluation and termination. (Chapman, et al., 2016) With a standardise diagram of the process being as follows.
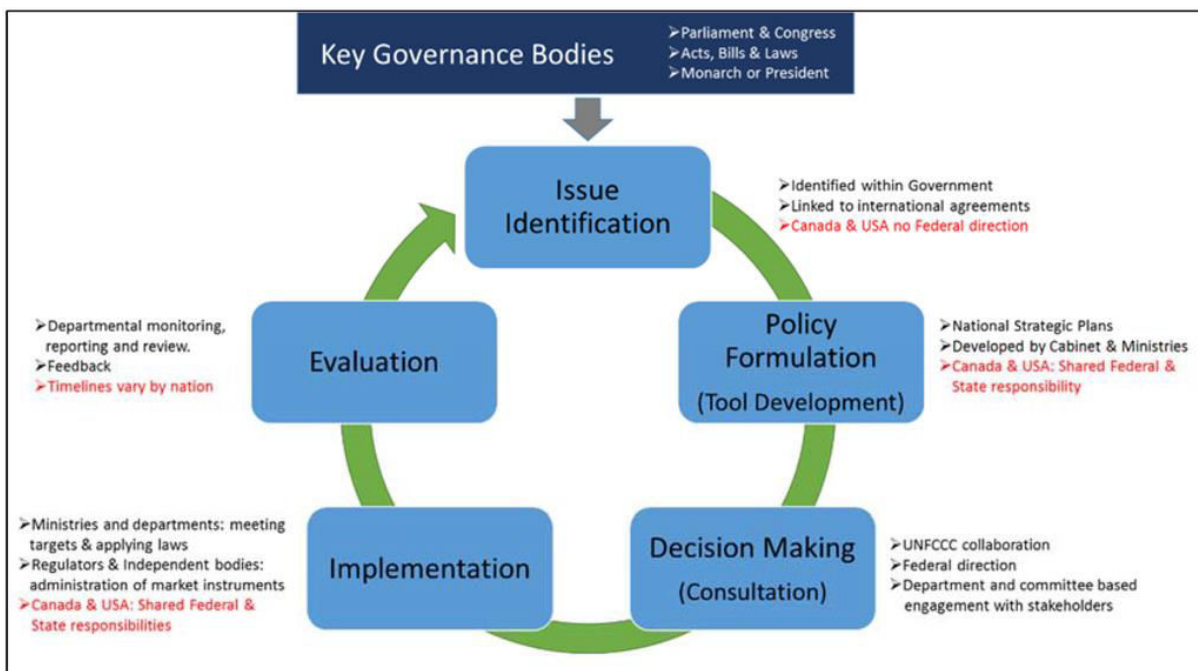
Figure 1. OECD Governance and Policy making process (Chapman, et al., 2016; 9)

While it is important to understand the theoretical process which some organisations still prescribe to, it is more important to understand the realistic approach to the policy making process and the key aspects to engage with as this is how organisations can and do engage.

In research conducted by the Institute for Government they identify four main problems which affect the policy making process which must be thought about when organisations engage with policy makers. They are the process of policy making, qualities in relation to what policy makers are looking to get out of new policies, structures of access and engagement and the politics of the policy making process. (Hallsworth, et al., 2011; 30) There has already been a number of attempts to edit or to present the way which decision makers carry out the policy process over the last decade and a half, but there has still been no clear new method of working as the process is continuously flexible.

This is showing while the theoretical model of the policy making process is still useful in understanding the different stages which occur but it has to be understood that the other factors

are still at play. It also needs to be noted that the process does not stand still and outside shocks influence drastically the speed and direction.

Motivation

This section of the chapter is used to discuss the motivations for both CSO and policy makers to engage with each other in the policy making process. The reason why this report has taken an interest in the motivation of these groups is that there is a number of challenges presented by member states of mainly international organisations but then also at local level that by engaging with other parties it makes the process of legislation or decision making much slower, so why is there a decision to engage. As this research looked at aspects relating to engagement at local and international level this will be split.

From the research, there is two key factors which motivate organisations to engage with policy makers at the local level. The first instance which is a motivation factor is the organisation fighting for funding in order to be able to continue their organisation work. This is a true motivation in the current situation where government funding is 'drying up' and organisations are competing for the same funding pot. The second motivation towards CSO engaging with policy makers is the organisation wish to change or keep a certain piece of legislation or policy in place as it is relevant to their organisation if this is in relation to healthcare or support for youth facilities.

But what is more important for CSO in the reasons why decision makers engage with those organisations as this will allow possible routes of access. There are a number of reasons why national decision makers are motivated to engaging with civil society first of all when the campaign of the group has some form of personal connection with the decision maker or representative. A key place where this is having been noted of being useful is within armed forces organisations contacting former armed forces personal who have become the decision makers as they are aware of the situation which is being campaigned for. The second most important motivation for any decision maker which is influenced by elections and voters is having a 'state centric approach' or an approach which shows the decision maker the feeling of their voters and if it is a favourable position as politicians are concerned about re-elected. This means that organisations which are working to influence national decision makers need to carry out important public consultation in order to have evidence of support for their position where there could be a disagreement to the new policy or where the need for the new policy has not been established.

Now moving away from the individual decision maker to the institution motivation to engaging with CSO which first of all is on the basis of the political situation of the country or area. This is presenting the point that there are previous actions which have occurred which for decision makers to feel they can be solved they need to engage with those that have been affected. Two examples of this is first of all gun violence which will be discussed below and also in Canada the history of the government relations with the indigenous population and the need to reform this.

The final but least important motivation for national decision makers to engage with these organisations is that it allows them to have a form of international recognition from IOs and the other states as they are showing that they are engaging with non-state actors and are listening to the views of others. This then allows that state to be able to use this as a 'influencer' on the international stage when they are discussing with states which may be less than willing to engage with non-state actors.

When having the opportunity to discuss youth engagement at the national level there was in general a historic purpose for the push or increase in participation mechanisms. A specific example of where

the historic situation has led to a push for increase youth participation is within Toronto where as a solution to the increased gun violence it was important to involve more young people in developing strategies and methods. This was noted by Glen Harkness, the executive director of the Boys and Girls Club of Hamilton who commented "If there's no engagement from youth, then they won't be invested in this process. They need to be involved from the beginning." (Carter, 2015) Another reason why there could have been an increase in youth engagement is that it provides a different platform and a different way in conducting political education is through involving them directly with the engagement process. However, there was also a view from some that by engaging with young people at a national level was due to a political motive of the administration whether that is due to the administration really wanting a youth voice in their administration or if it was used more as a political tool to be able to use against any opposition as a success of the government.

Now internationally and CSO decision to engage with International Organisations or groups, these decisions tend to be much less about access to finance even though there is sometimes that possibility. However, there are two main motivations which first of all is getting the issue which they are pushing for heard and being bought on to the international scene as being important to solve, while the issue may already be on the international scene, CSOs still engage in order to show that they can provide valuable information and expertise to the international community. The next motivation for engagement with decision makers is that it allows the organisation to have some level of international recognition for their campaign and idea if they receive some attention for it. This is as much about a publicity aspect for the organisations as it is in pushing ideas forward.

While there is the motivation for organisations to engage where there is normally a greater motivation is for IOs to engage with CSOs. A key point where there is a recurring point both throughout academic literature and with stakeholders is the idea that engaging is an 'international norm' and CSO are 'part of the life blood of these organisations' which shows how it is now standard practice and is unknown for IOs not to be engaging it just depends on the level of access or engagement is given to them.

Furthermore, what was a reoccurring aspect for engagement was the organisation driving for increased accountability and increased transparency internationally. An aspect of where this has been key is IOs presenting an image which is further than a closed-door member state only organisation. There was also a further reoccurring theme with the belief that by having further engagement with civil society they can strengthen and maintain the openness and inclusion of international organisations

As well as the reoccurring theme of accountability and transparency there was the comment that these organisations are 'knowledge hubs' and are 'closer to the ground' so can provide a voice or information to the IOs about the effects of their work on the ground so they are aware if their work is being successful to its aim. This includes being able to provide analysis of the affects which can be carried out through closer to the ground non-intrusive and non-western style evaluation of work.

The final motivation of international organisations engaging with CSOs is on the basis of the role of small CSOs/ NGOs can have on their work as they have a specific expertise or skills which they can provide. They key skills and expertise which act as the motivator when dealing with IOs are;

- South based NGOs help solve the Gender Issues which are presented
- They know the landscape where the work is being carried out
- They can act as a 3rd party monitoring system
- They know the correct culture and behaviour

- They know how to gain leverage at the local level
- They can do more than governments can in regards to getting the message out to their local communities.

When specifically discussing the motivation for engagement with young people at the international level, a comment was raised a number of times that youth engagement shouldn't become a 'lip service' which delved in to meaning that decision makers should not just engage with young people because they think it is the right thing to do without a truly engaging and allowing young people some voice. However, this was overcome when discussing why some programmes succeed as some international actors view it as a 'value added effect' so by more young people being involved in the processes of these international organisations it means that more people are educated so can engage much more fully.

Conclusion

Overall this chapter has presented an introduction to the key ideas which make up an important aspect of this report and provides the general understanding of key concepts discussed in the rest of this report. There is a number of key factors which have been raised throughout this chapter which includes the different reasons why organisations may engage with civil society and the need for civil society to identify the best possible way of engagement.

However, there is also the need for decision makers and policy makers to engage constructively with civil society and to decide why they are engaging especially in circumstances involving young people if it is a 'we care' situation versus a 'have to' situation, with of course the actually caring engagement being the best motivation to engage. Civil Society organisations have 'so much to offer' decision makers through expertise and local contacts which is why there should be the continuous engagement.

WORLD BANK GROUP

Case Study 1: World Bank Group

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have emerged as a major force in international development in the past 30 years. The World Bank Group has been working to strengthen its engagement with civil society since 1981, when its first operational policy note on relations with CSOs was approved by the World Bank's Board of Directors. There are over 120 professionals in the Bank's Washington, DC Headquarters, and in over 100 country offices, that act as Civil Society Focal Points responsible for engaging CSOs from the local to the global levels. There is also the Global Civil Society Team located in the Bank's External and Corporate Relations Department that coordinates the overall engagement and relationship management with CSOs.

The World Bank Group interact with Civil Society Organisations through various information sharing, policy dialogue, strategy consultation and in operations. CSOs help to give a voice to those affected by projects so that their views are factored into policies and programs. They promote accountability, bring innovative solutions to the table and strengthen development programs through their expertise, access to local knowledge and assistance.

Civil Society has a number of ways with engaging with the World Bank Group's work which they promote through five stages. The five stages which are information access and dissemination which is self-explanatory. The second stage is policy dialogue to allow both sides to be better informed which they do mainly do through their roundtables and their annual and spring meetings. Their third stage is consultation which is when they consult civil society actors. Then there is collaboration which is short term work together and finally there is partnership which is more long term working together. As of their last report, most WBG civil society relations have been concentrated at the first three levels of the engagement continuum. The WBG are clear that with each level of engagement, the nature of the interactivity, the level of decision making and the expected outputs increase. As involvement increases, so does influence.

The WBG showed quite clearly their commitment to civil society participation through the range of engagement methods which they use but also the level of transparency which they give to their activities.

Find out more: www.worldbank.org/en/about/partners/civil-society

Case Study 2: The Student Commission

The Students Commission was founded in 1991 with a mission to help young people put their ideas for improving themselves, their communities and their world into action. In the year 2000, The Students Commission became the lead of The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, which networks academics, youth organizations and young people together to provide research and training to improve youth programs and youth engagement in Canada. An independent, charitable, non-governmental organization, The Students Commission is active across Canada, supporting young people to participate in the activities of local, provincial, national and international organizations and governments. The Students Commission operates on four pillars: Respect, Listen, Understand and Communicate. These are our core values and our core process.

The Students Commission:
- holds conferences for youth, and for adults who work with youth, to learn skills, share information and address barriers.
- supports young people to develop projects to assist people in their communities.
- delivers workshops in schools, community organizations, and at our offices.
- trains young people in office skills, research and evaluation, facilitation, desk-top publishing, web design and video production.
- develops programs with youth in the areas of substance abuse, violence prevention, mental health, stress management, and tobacco prevention.
- engages youth in discussion groups, consultations and youth advisories to amplify the ideas of young people.
- conducts research and evaluation on meaningful youth engagement, communicates results, and develops policies and guidelines.
- develops and distributes tools and resources for youth and adults who work with youth.

This organisation uses a variety of methods to best engage with young people and carry out their project work. But they are not just a youth facilitation organisation, they also have diversification through the fact that they carry out evaluation work for other projects.

Find out more: www.studentscommission.ca
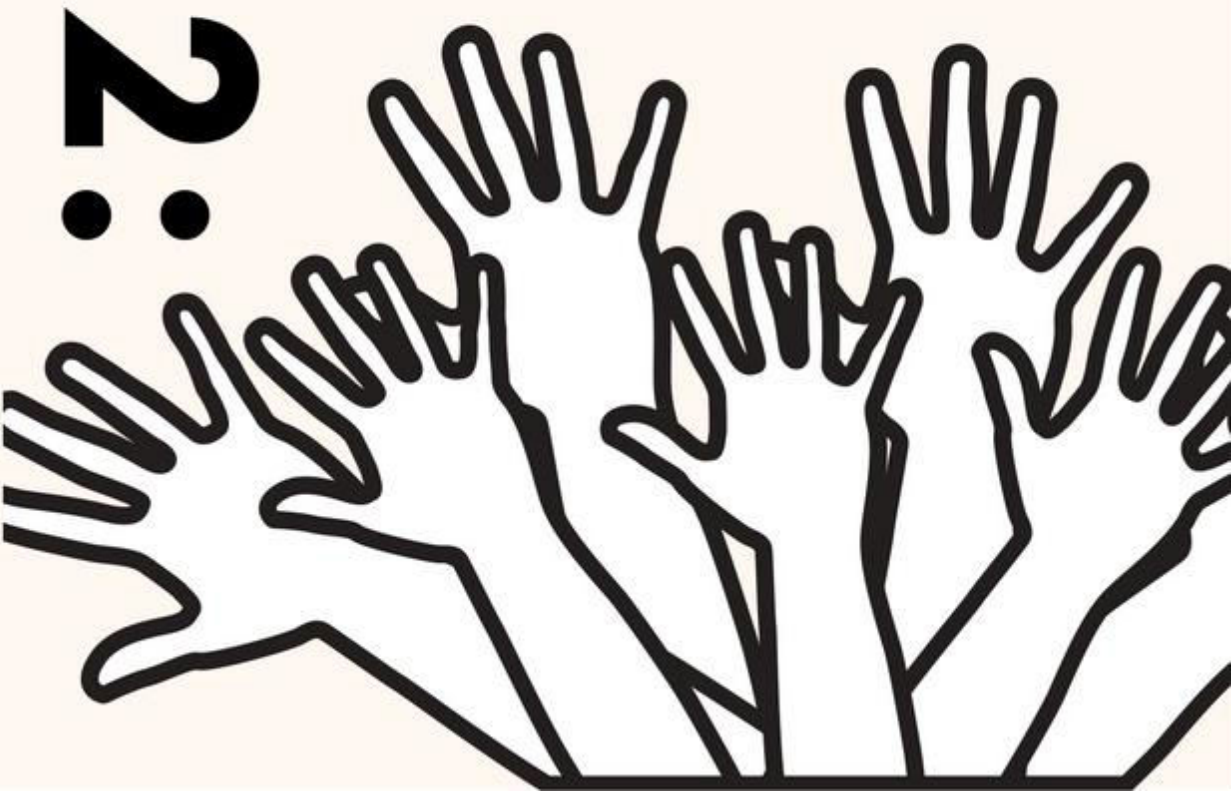
CHAPTER 2:
BE HEARD

Chapter 2: Engagement: What is the best way to get your issue heard?

Introduction

This chapter will explore the main examples of good practice for the best methods for civil society organisations to engage with national and international decision makers but this chapter will also begin to engage with ways how decision makers can make engagement easier with CSOs. One of the most supporting aspects which was shown from the research was that "the future is open, you don't who or what there is going to be" which shows that this field is continuously evolving and new methods of engagement is continuously evolving. To begin with this will focus on general concepts of engagement which can be used as methods of engagement across different types of organisations and cannot be truly narrowed down into being either national or international. This chapter will then move to looking at specific methods of engagement at a national level. This will have a specific look at evidence building and creating the remote conversation with decision makers and supporters. The next part of this chapter will then look at engagement at the international level with a specific focus on the United Nations and the World Bank Group including discussion how CSOs can work together in order to develop strategic relationships in order to move an agenda forward. The final aspect of this report will look more specifically at one form of international engagement through the ECOSOC NGO Committee and what the accreditation of that committee can offer but more importantly some of the suggested best ways of engaging with it.

General

There is a view by some of those engaged that there is still a long term need to institutionalise efforts of civil society engagement through there being a push to work with more government ministries and for the parliamentary system to open up. This will not be possible just through a one side campaign for access but there needs to be further movement for government departments to look at the way that they work with civil society but more importantly the information which is there for civil society to engage. But it is also important for CSO need to make sure that they avoid tokenistic positions which they are offered by decision makes as by accepting them it could show that there is no need for the more in-depth engagement. It is important in this day and age of having free societies which support civil society that when decision makers truly want to engage they offer a meaningful position. Civil society need to make sure that they stay alert and informed about developments in their sector for a wide range of reasons.

Furthermore, there are some which commented that there are multiple points of entry to decision makers but the aspect which is important when working with decision makers is that it is important to 'toe the line' in regards to the way of working but then also CSO need to hold the line on basic ideas and principles so not to be taken advantage of by decision makers and not to receive the access which civil society deserves. Many actors have stated that there is a need for organisations to promote their selves as being a creditable actor in the system due to the nature that for organisations to be taken seriously by decision makers they have to act as serious actors especially when working in the international sphere.

The first aspect of this chapter is methods of engagement which can be used across institutions and are not overly specific to one institution or another. There are a number of different methods which will be presented some of which are simple techniques others might require investment of time or capital in large amounts. To begin with a simple method for raising knowledge of the organisations

agenda is by boosting the publicity of it. This can be carried out in a number of ways such as by writing to the press, publicity poster campaigns to 'creating the remote conversation' with the public and decision makers through social media. The reason why increasing public awareness is an important aspect of engaging with policy makers is if it is noticed that a large amount of the population support a particular agenda then they may be more likely to listen especially elected members as there is the aspect regarding election odds. Building public awareness is also key as it allows for there to be greater number of supporters to push the agenda further and to show support as a mass rather than a few raising it. An important aspect of this is gaining support from the media to communicate your issue as they have a large reach to be able to communicate your issue in an effective manner. While not every campaign or agenda is able to gain the media attention it is important to make them relevant to the headlines of the day.

While there is as much a publicity aspect to raising an agenda item, it can also be raised and taken notice of in some institutions by writing to the formal decision maker or organisation to raise the issue. This method is a very simple method but at times when decision makers may be trying to get the support of others they may be likely to listen. While this may not be very effective if the decision maker does not listen, or pay attention to what you have raised, at least the agenda item has been raised for future.

Going from the relatively simple aspect of letter writing, CSOs can use new and creative ways such as the use of 'Virtual Reality' to raise their agenda in the public space and with decision makers. By using these innovative technologies, it allows CSO to "get the audience up-close-and-personal with your mission, experience the impact of its work, bring exposure to the organisations work and position the organisation as a thought leader." (Bjoran, 2017) These range of opportunities allow organisations to develop new and innovative ways of bringing what can be complex information into a participative method of engagement. Although this method may not work for every organisation it does show how organisations do not need to stick with standard methods to make a difference.

But not everything is about the public promotion of an agenda as some agendas can be as effective working 'behind the scenes' with decision makers if there is engagement already or access can be gained. With that aspect, it is always suggested that to gain a level of influence on decision makers is by working with their civil servants and department advisors as they have direct access to the decision maker and are more likely to be leading on the policy development.

Once access is gained by an organisation, one way to get their discontent heard or new position taken notice of is by boycotting formal process, whether this is in relation to an international conference on a subject or a national visit where representatives are invited. By engaging in some processes on mass, organisations have the ability to be heard as decision makers may be concerned over the public image situation it could create or how comments could be suggested about the legitimacy of talks without having the third sector voice involved. This method is only likely to be successful where civil society has organised on mass to raise their discontent and if it did not occur very often as it would mean that the lack of CSOs would be noticed.

When dealing with decision makers that are opposed to your organisations agenda it is important to make sure that as an organisation you understand their issues with it for you to try and adapt your advocacy campaign to make it answer their important questions or to fit their timeframe as the policy process can move quickly. Especially when there is opposition to a campaign it is then important to find and build on common ground which the organisation has with the decision maker as this means that they are more likely to listen to ideas and concerns which organisations raise.

With a key method of getting attention from decision makers it is important to present that the organisation is knowledgeable on their area. Mulgan notes "that both government and society are better informed and more interested in knowledge and evidence than ever before." (2003) Which shows for decision makers to take an agenda or idea seriously they need to make sure that it is backed up with relevant research and evidence so they could see the idea working elsewhere before implementation in the UK. By having a wide range of knowledge, it was noted that it allows CSO to act as a "Crisis Centre" for governments and decision makers so that they know they can rely on them in relation an area and can be beneficial when evidence or knowledge is needed quickly. However, in a Commission on the Social Sciences Report (2003) NGOs have received a deep criticism of the way that they present their data as 'government ministers and civil servants were scathing about some of the [research] work they receive. This is claimed all too often to speak naively of policy issues, demonstrate little or no awareness of current policy, is over-technical and sometimes need drastic editing to make it readable to key players.' (in Maxwell, 2003; 53) What this shows is that CSO need to be smarter about the way which they communicate with key decision makers 'by talking the talk' as this will mean they will be more widely accepted.

The final method that CSOs can use to engage with policy makers is the idea of multiple organisations working together to build coalitions which allow for a large group of organisations to work collectively to push for a similar agenda. This specifically is beneficial as when there are more organisations involved, organisations can 'push' on multiple routes to decision makers. Furthermore, it is important that these organisations prioritise their agenda and make sure that they are meeting their organisations goal, this then also includes making sure that the organisation follow up accordingly with their campaigns as it shows that they really care about their work. While coalitions help, it doesn't mean that individual organisations should explore their own individual campaigns as there are several benefits specifically it helps to provide visibility and legitimacy to an organisation to decision makers.

National

Next, this chapter is looking at the potential methods of engagement for organisations when working to influence policy at a national level. The first aspect which was raised a number of times during the research was that organisations should try to "influence at the national level the most as you don't always want to be a CSO which is constantly engaging against the government" which is important as an organisation is unlikely to be able to get 'much traction' if they are constantly opposing their home government especially in western 'free' states as many other states would not engage with organisations if the home states feel that they are legitimate. This is specifically important when looking at the UN appeals process which is discussed further on in this chapter. It is not only that organisations should work with the national government but it is also beneficial to work at more local levels as the local level is closer to true citizen impact where it can be shown that there is support for or that the activity works.

There are several ways which organisations can engage with decision makers on the national level which includes providing simple to understanding briefing materials for representatives for speeches in the chamber when they are having a debate on your issue. This is then supported by organisations providing evidence and getting involved in relevant committee hearings when they call for evidence in investigations. This helps to raise the profile of the organisation and it helps to show that the organisation is knowledgeable on their topic. Despite the fact several CSOs do already provide briefing materials or evidence to committees there is still the opportunity for it to go further by

more organisations being involved but more importantly CSOs need to make sure that what they provide is easy to understand and decision makers need to make sure that as many organisations or citizens are aware of opportunities for engagement.

Over this research a comment which was noted multiple times was the need for parliamentarians to do more to engage directly with CSO and to promote their voices through all institutional avenues. This is not something which can be achieved by CSOs it is something which parliamentarians across the world need to identify the best possible ways to engage and to make them occur.

International

The final aspect of this chapter is that of possible ways for CSOs to engage with the international community and to have their agenda heard by important actors. When discussing civil society role within international bodies it is always important to remember that there are not just the actors of the state and the civil society organisation but there is also the IO Secretariat which many of these have. Through the research, it was clearly identifiable how this relationship can go under strain very often. It could be suggested that the secretariat is between a 'rock and a hard place' much of the time as many secretariats have desires to be fully open however there are also demands which may restrict space by the member states. Even though that may be a perceived view of the situation much of the research also showed a variety of strains on this relationship, which provided an insight into the true challenges of engagement with an international organisation which is discussed further in the report.

However, this research proposed several important methods for the ways that organisations should engage with decision makers. The first point of this is that organisations especially at the international level need to promote their selves as being a credible and trustworthy organisation especially when the topic which the organisation is promoting is one of a 'sensitive' nature. By the term 'sensitive' this is used to describe a topic which does not have consensus across the international community or more specifically where some member states feel like that they could be targeted this is especially in cases relating to Human Rights, Women or the rule of law.

To begin with a key aspect of CSO knowledge to engage with International Organisations is that CSO need to learn the correct diplomatic skills to promote and organise their campaigns with member states as they would be using the same protocol as they are but then it also helps them to better understand the process as it is important to remember that these organisations are designed to be state to state deliberations so many states still treat it as such.

As not every event or situation is available to CSOs there are also other opportunities for them to engage through activities such as 'corridor lobbying' at the International Organisation as it allows them access to the key decision makers without necessarily needing to be in the deliberations. While direct participation is minimalised this still provides an opportunity for CSOs to have their viewpoints heard by states and potentially included if states are supportive.

When discussing CSO engagement with IO actors that was a recurring theme that CSO need to "Be Savvy" at international events and use them to your advantage by managing to promote the CSO agenda and by taking ownership of these events. By taking ownership of events, it means that CSO should use every opportunity to push forward their agenda and viewpoint on how to make the world better. This can be done in several ways by first developing a relationship with several member states that will really champion your issue so that they can help to run side events at these events. But these events can be used to pressure individual states to make aa change in a policy but

bringing the international community's attention to what's happening at individual level and because of this they may change their policies.

However, it is important that CSOs be strategic in the events which they engage with as it is important that they focus their attention on ones which the organisation is passionate about the topic as this will then be evident and relevant to the aims of the event. Then for very specific circumstances actors suggested that CSOs can either use the formal High-Level Meetings or the more informal method of Group of Friends which focus on specific issues. It has been noted that Group of Friends tend to be the most effective in really getting something done when they are linked to formal negotiations which are occurring at that time. This can also be beneficial as these states are likely to champion the issue further with other member states. The first task for CSO is to try and influence member states in the 'planning' stage for high-level meetings to make sure that that CSOs can participate in the events at all and that they are thought about in a positive way. It is through this continuous push and engagement in the field that it could lead to an even stronger norm of CSO engagement in international affairs and with international actors.

Much like working with national representatives and decision makers there is a need to provide targeted easy to understand messaging to IO member states to show exactly what the agenda the organisation is trying to get across. This involves 'spoon feeding' information about debate points and providing the precise language which the CSO would like to see in the organisations resolution. This is to provide ease of access and ease of understanding of the aim of the organisation.

It is important for CSOs working at the international level to work cross regionally on their issues to make sure that the CSO does not show any signs of bias or more importantly the lack of engagement cannot be used as a political tool by other less supportive states as they may use the term 'western influence'. This then goes further to be that CSO should not be relying on one or two member states to promote their agenda as in international politics there is always the possibility of shocks occurring to the system and a change of policy by a state which would leave their agenda vulnerable to states who fully disagree with them. To rectify this possibility there is a need for CSOs to bolster their support base with other states and especially cross regionally so that there should always be a supporting member state in these international organisations. But just because some states may be cautious about a particular agenda this also means that civil society should not isolate them as there is a strategic importance in campaigns to target states who could possible change their position and by civil society continue to engage these states then it gives opportunities to present their case.

When working with states it is important that CSO develop both the formal and informal engagement with them. The formal engagement is through engagement at formal events whether this is at high level meetings or through general debates. The informal aspect of engagement is particularly related to the efforts that non-state actors make to engage states outside of these processes whether that is through organising meetings or running other events in the location of the IO headquarters for example and then invite state representatives to attend.

It is important to note that through previous experience many IO actors believe that it is difficult for CSOs to have the meaningful engagement with member states and other actors or to influence policy in the international scene at one off events or ad-hoc engagement as it does not support that continuous process. Though it is also important that CSOs engage in the international community at the 'right time' to make sure that their input is the most useful and best received.

A beneficial way to truly engage with the IO is by building connections with the most relevant secretariat members. The secretariat of the IO plays a very important role in the coordination of the

work of the IO. By developing these relationships, the CSO is likely to be able to better understand the opportunities which there are for engagement. Particularly in the United Nations, the ECOSOC "NGO Committee is not the only route of engagement but it is the best" which will be discussed next but it does show while there are many possible access routes sometimes the 'most difficult' route could be the most beneficial to take thus supporting the CSO work and agenda.

As will be discussed in Chapter 4 of this report that are always many difficulties which CSO face regarding their topic of work when they are trying to gain accreditation to this body, however this is also likely to be applicable at other International Organisations. Nevertheless, those that are actors in the field of IO and NGO links have suggested that NGO's are 'clever' in their application by applying to gain entry through a 'soft topic' such as Youth, education or health all of which seem to be non-contentious issues at the UN committee. The role the CSO then should play is to make a connection between that soft topic in to their agenda where their agenda would of likely of meant that their application would have been delayed.

What many states and actors now feel is that International Organisations cannot 'back track' from the level of openness where they are at now, even though some would say it is not open enough they already have moved on. This has been clear in the UN Human Rights Committee elections and in the next election of the Director-General of the World Health Organisation which was 'a much more open process' as it was inspired by the UN Secretary General process. This is clearly a positive sign for civil society and those states that support transparency and access.

United Nations ECOSOC NGO Committee

The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations is a standing committee of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), established by the Council in 1946. It reports directly to ECOSOC, and the two reports of its annual regular session (usually at the end of January) and resumed session (in May) include draft resolutions or decisions on matters calling for action by the Council.
The main tasks of the Committee are:

- The consideration of applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification submitted by NGOs;
- The consideration of quadrennial reports submitted by NGOs in General and Special categories;
- The implementation of the provisions of Council resolution 1996/31 and the monitoring of the consultative relationship;
- Any other issues which the ECOSOC may request the Committee to consider.
(United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs – NGO Branch, n.d b)

Evan though this is not about CSO engagement with the committee, it is important to understand that this committee is faced by a series of internal challenges and complications. Even though there has been this previous experience and difficulty much of the evidence still suggests that if an organisation really wants to engage on the international setting then this is the committee which they should be accredited through.

While there are several ways to engage with the UN which do not necessarily include accreditation through ECOSOC, ECOSOC is still the most attractive option for many civil society organisations as it also allows access to the UN Human Rights Council which is not relevant to all organisations but is a very beneficial for many organisations. Furthermore, there are the ad-hoc basis of engagement but

it is seen that "Accreditation is the best wat to engage with the United Nations as it allows for the organisation to sustain their relationship with member states and the work which they have already carried out." This is rather than just occasional ad-hoc basis of engagement as not all events or meetings which are open to CSO have an ad-hoc accreditation basis to them.

To begin with for a more specialised information or resource on the application process of getting accreditation to this committee and other engagement with the United Nations, the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) resource 'A practical guide to the UN Committee on NGOS" is a useful read.

From the research carried out with those with an association with the body a key beginning part is that it is important for CSOs to use UN terminology in their application and in any correspondence with states but then also they need to use UN terminology on their website and promotional materials. This is not designed to make CSO campaigns less effective or to silence certain organisations but it helps to make the CSO seem more 'neutral and focusing on the thematic issue' rather than particularly focusing on a member state of the committee where they are then able to slow down the CSO application.

"Even during the application stage, CSOs need to go beyond just the application and already start engaging with states in any way possible to build the relationships." This idea of continuous engagement with states is designed to allow the organisation to find states that are both in the NGO committee and on ECOSOC which can be lobbied in order to support the application but this should not just be states which are supportive of civil society as by engaging with states that that are not fully committed there is the possibility to convince them of the positives of involvement of CSOs and to provide answers to their questions which may lead to some level of support or if not the possibility of support an abstention.

A conceivable way for a CSO to gain accreditation when they have been blocked by the NGO Committee is by finding a member state of ECOSOC which is willing to challenge the decision of the committee in the parent body which is ECOSOC. A recent example of where this has been done is with Christian Solidarity Worldwide, where the UK Mission to the UN appealed the NGO Committee decision. In the appeal H.H. Matthew Rycroft (Permanent Representative of the UK Mission to the UN) said:

> *"When a serious and credible NGO such as Christian Solidarity Worldwide is kept waiting in limbo for seven years, the system is clearly not working as it should…Its work is directly relevant to ECOSOC. It is in full compatibility with the aims and purposes of the UN Charter, as well as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other United Nations human rights covenants. CSW works actively to promote the aims and purposes of the Charter. It even trains other civil society partners to work within the UN system and fully utilise UN mechanisms. The conclusion we draw is that the NGO Committee's decisions have not been based on the merits of CSW's application."* (Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 2017)

While there may be a wish from CSO for ECOSOC member states to support them in this once an application has been deferred or refused, it is important to note that when a member states raises an appeal they are extending their political capital supporting that application. While this is a useful way for CSO to become accredited when facing a blockage by the NGO Committee, it is unlikely that there will be a mass movement of cases being brought before ECOSCO for appeal as it then loses its impact which states hope it will have. In His Excellency Matthew Rycroft's speech to the Council it could be noted that the UK Government decided to raise this appeal to bring attention to the

ineffectiveness of the NGO Committee especially on certain topics, (as further discussed in Chapter 4) which is specifically noted in:

> "But sadly that is not the case. There has been repeated discrimination against NGOs with a human rights focus in particular. Yet we know that human rights, including freedom of religion and belief, are essential to build societies which are secure, prosperous and resilient against extremism. It's vital that NGOs granted consultative status reflect the full spectrum of issues of concern to ECOSOC and the United Nations. That must include the promotion and protection of human rights, one of the fundamental pillars of the United Nations." (2017)

There is also a lot of discussion surrounded in the field about possible ways to reform the UN ECOSOC NGO Committee to make sure that it is truly meeting its purpose and is providing as much access as possible. There is some discussion if the mandate which exists for the committee of "Article 71 of the Charter [should act] as the upper limit for access; *or* use it as the baseline" (UNECE, 2003; 28) which shows how there is still a need for the committee and ECOSOC as the parent body to understand how the article should be implemented to its best affect.

While not necessarily in the aims of this research report, during the research there was several occasions when there were conversations around reform of the committee and potential ways where it could work better which is why it will be included for future discussion.

The first point that was raised a few times was there being a need to increase the transparency of the NGO committee meeting further. Even though there was the recent decision by the committee to webcast its meetings to 'improve accessibility to the UN' (ISHR, 2017) there has still been calls by some to improve transparency by giving them more publicity to non-state actors and by increasing the availability of information regarding accredited CSOs and the application process. The next point which was raised is to make sure the committee is as effective as possible in dealing with application that the number of proceedings should be increased to deal with the backlog. The final comments raised about the working methods of the committee was comments around the support which the secretariat provides as being 'out dated, lack reliability and prioritisation.' While many of these suggested actions would seem simple to implement it is raised that this committee is immensely underfunded for the work which it has to carry out especially in relation to the number of accreditation applications which it receives.

Another area which was raised about the working methods of the committee was in relation to the accreditation 'criteria' which due to the nature of committee positively supports small NGOs from the south due to the previous underrepresentation of them which has led to many them gaining accreditation. Where this was raised as a less productive aspect of the committee's work was due to the reasoning 'that in general they do not add much to the discussion when they are engaging in the UN.' While a criterion is against the spirit of the mandate which is in place for this committee, this has been raised as it is important for CSO to commit to UN engagement so that CSO and decision makers can 'get the most out of it.' As if decision makers are aware that there are a lot of civil society accredited but never engage with them in a constructive way then there could be questions surrounding future engagement.

While there may be these issues within the committee, there has been moves to increase the transparency within the committee through the beginning of webcasting the sessions. What many

actors feel is important now is that it is important for NGOs to safeguard what is already there and not to allow unsupportive states to remove these needed access points for all.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a wide variety of methods used to engage with a range of decision makers. Not all of the methods which have been presented in this chapter will work for every organisation looking to engage with policy makers but organisations can still use some or parts of methods to engage from the simple ones of simply building the public image of a campaign through writing to the press to gaining accreditation at the United Nations and campaigning all states to make a difference on their agenda.

The general and national basis has presented a variety of methods most of which are in use today by civil society actors but the key aspect is for them to identify what is the aim of their advocacy or policy engagement level and what methods would work best from sitting on advisory committees to create the publicity movement.

On the international basis, it is important for those engaging with the international community to be strategic in their engagement to get the best from it all. Though it is important that if civil society does want to make one of their engagement points through an IO that they then commit to that engagement and do not think that real tangible outcomes are possible without it. Furthermore, there is a need to think strategically of the best possible ways for organisations to use the system to be heard.

One of the questions which remains for civil society now is how do they hold the UN Secretary General accountable for his 'promises' and actions – in order to show that there demand for access and transparency is continuous and not just at certain stages of processes.

Case Study 3: OpenGov Hub

The OpenGov Hub is the world's first co-working community focused on transparency and open government issues. We are a co-working community in Washington, D.C. and a network of over 35 organizations, mostly international development NGOs, promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement around the world. The 20,000-square foot Hub is the physical workspace home of about 200 people promoting these open government ("OpenGov") reforms through technology, research, media, and advocacy.

The OpenGov Hub's mission is twofold:
1. to provide a physical home to opengov organizations (helping them be more efficient and share resources)
2. to serve as the centre for collaboration, learning, and innovation on opengov issues, helping members be more effective and have greater impact together.

OpenGov Hub shows how organisations can work together physically to improve knowledge sharing via organisations on way of working but then also where working relationships can be generated to booster their work.

Find out more: www.opengovhub.org

Case Study 4: 1 for 7 Billion Campaign (UN Secretary General Selection)

The 1 for 7 Billion Campaign had its roots in the earlier campaign "UNSGselection", aimed to improve the selection process ahead of the appointment of the Secretary-General in 2006 which was developed by the World Federalist Movement.

However, the 1 for 7 Billion Campaign is a civil society campaign calling for the selection and appointment process of the UN Secretary-General to be reformed and to be made more transparent.

They called for "an open, transparent and merit-based selection process offers the best chance to find the best Secretary-General. We need a process that sets out formal selection criteria and qualifications, meets modern practices and exemplifies the UN's ideals. We need a process that meets the higher standards of transparency and accountability that UN Member States and civil society have been demanding for years. We need a process that is grounded in best practice on equality and diversity. We need a process that provides meaningful involvement from all Member States, appropriate input from civil society, and matches that of other high-level international appointments."

This campaign has been included as a case study of best practice as it received a large amount of interest from the media and from member states of the UN. It shows how Civil Society Organisations can work together to raise attention of an issue. Even though they did not achieve their main goals this

Fine out more: www.1for7billion.org

CHAPTER 3: YOUTH LEADERS

Chapter 3: Young People: Our leaders now and in the future

Introduction

This third chapter of this research is focused on and brings into the main thoughts surrounding the role of young people as future leaders and how the researched countries have taken different approaches to engaging young people in the policy cycle. Even though youth engagement has been and will continue to be discussed in other chapters, this chapter takes the role of being the most substantive of them. There tends to be a range of reasons for why different areas chose to carry out youth engagement differently. These challenges and risks which they face will be discussed in the next chapter. This report will begin by focusing on the role of young people in the policy process, this then will be followed by some discussion and examples of the way to involve young people. Finally, this report will look at the way that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is implemented or thought about in the locations visited and from the organisations view as well.

Role

The first place where this chapter will begin is by looking at the role which young people have or are 'allowed' to have with an implication on policy making. Throughout this research it was continuously insisted that "youth are very significant in terms of development and future leaders", however it is sometimes evident that there are other factors influencing the role young people have available. It is also key to remember they key motivation's which were identified in chapter one was around either it being a political commitment or there was some previous form of violence or unrest and have a formal engagement method would resolve this. Even though this was the motivation a lot of the time there was also times when youth participation was identified as an area of development which is why effort was put in to achieve positive results.

Without focusing too much on previous discussion, it is important to look at the role which young people can play in the policy cycle. From the visits which occurred there are three different views or main ways of youth engagement from the act of knowledge building and the associated policy ideas raised, to young people representing their self to young people acting as representatives on behalf of other groups and young people. They all offer a unique perspective and some of the organisations specifically were 'turned off' the idea of having young people represent other young people as it causes further issues about making sure that the representation is true representation and not just in name. Where the organisations then step back from criticism received when they are not representative in the policy process is by saying that the young people selected, are selected on the basis on previous lived experience, a range of diversity, engagement locally and then they also use some level of randomness in their decision-making processes.

There are some movement as other ways to both support young people development and have some form of continuous representation and that is through employing young people to act as 'Youth Amplifiers' who's work for the organisation part time on specific projects. This means that the young people receive some direct experience but also that there is continuous youth engagement on the project issue and provided the lived experience to help with outreach. Where the organisation has the resource to be able to support young people it can be a real benefit and after having the benefit of discussing the way it works and the success of the programme with the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth as they regularly use it for their work.

Methods

The next section of this chapter is specifically looking at the methods which are used to engage with young people ranging from how often they meet to the age range which is represented. An ongoing message which was shared was that young people engage with different civil society organisations or campaigns but seem less likely to engage with the parliamentary institutions, so there is a need to move the ways of engagement and to try and develop a way to make the issues engaging.

The first important aspect of youth engagement is remembering the importance of building relationships between external stakeholders and the project such as schools but then also internal ones as well as the one provides access to young people but without the complete organisation buy in then they are likely to move forward as best as they can with youth ideas of the policy process.

When talking to organisations there was a recurring view that to get the best engagement and views from young people, some things should be done through social media but it is also important to go out there and connect with young people through a variety of methods as they allow for complete discussion on areas. When looking at how to connect with young people, it is important to consider what you want out of it and who is likely to provide that information. For example, it was said that schools and youth groups allow to gain depth of responses from young people but they do not support them gaining a breadth of views as you may not be able to connect with excluded groups. To support these organisations, need to be using their existing networks or building new networks with relevant organisations to promote the engagement opportunities but also, they can be used to gather views of those that the organisation is not connected with.

With there being an interest to have youth lead organisations, some of them have created an advisory board for their participation platform for the organisation to have some 'professional' advice or adult lived experience on the best ways to go about doing this. This is obviously a positive method of getting experience yet still being youth led. There is a specific circumstance which is important that the adults do not become over bearing on the participation method and stop young people from leading. When having an advisory group, it does create some other issues such as the recruitment of members for it but then also what level of engagement should they have to make sure that it is meaningful engagement and rewarding for the members, while also being able to recruit members for it.

In the majority of circumstances, the young people engaged with the organisation were being asked for their views from different policy areas. The reason for this was that it means that the input they are giving is occurring at the time when they are going to have the largest effect on the policy making process and that they are discussing the issues which are a priority. While this is a fair assertion for having an impact in the policy process, it is also important that young people can influence the agenda and see their own priorities receive some attention.

Within the UK, there is often a great debate at the age which youth participation should begin but more importantly at the age which people no longer become young people to engage specifically with as they now have the power of the vote. Throughout the research there was a clear disagreement with the way that the UK stops most engagement at 18. Within both countries which were visited they both set their maximum age at the lowest of 24 which then went as high as 30, whether this is at the local level, national level or international level. Where there was a little bit more of a discrepancy was on the lower age limit as this ranged from 5 when there was project based work, to a minimum age of 13, 15 or 16 in some cases. Each time the reason for this was based on at that age the young people involved would be of an appropriate age to travel by their self or would be unable to understand complex issues. To make sure that there is a fair representation of

ages, some of these organisations specifically reserve a number of spaces for the different brackets such as 16-18 or their lowest age to the age of 18 to make sure that they get a fair representation. Furthermore, some organisations have set limits where certain roles are specifically reserved for over 18's as they should then have further experience to be able to do the role.

There is often a call for young people engaged in the policy process to be representing other young people based on many organisations that work directly on it here in the UK. However, there is also a number of other methods which are used to 'appoint' young people to these bodies. Some of these range from having a complete open membership so there is no need to apply they can just turn up at the meetings as they wish and then there is applications for higher positions in the organisations such as an executive. Then the next method which has been used by some organisations is the use of a simple application form and this is then followed by an interview. Though sometimes this is not just one interview, sometimes its two or may include an 'assessment centre' type day to identify skills and their real interest in policy processes. Furthermore, to just an application process there was also an example of where one government body used the public appointment process as it was a standardised method across all departments but then also the positions were classed as government appointments so had to follow those rules. When working with young people it is important to make sure that the application is as open and simple so that it does not exclude any group of young people.

Probably the most important aspect off this is the actual methods which they use to carry out their engagement. The methods which the organisations use very depending on their structure. Some of them use social media as their main form of engagement and to raising issues where as others hold physical meetings. Some of these physical meetings are held monthly, bimonthly, quarterly or annual meetings. Where the organisations have only a few physical meetings each year they tend to supplement this with either sub-committee meetings or the use of teleconferences either monthly or at bimonthly period of times in order to continue the engagement in the policy process. Some national working organisations use residential meetings as it provides a greater opportunity for prolong discussion on policy issues as it removes the concerns about meeting length as and travel issues as they have a prolong time together which is why this method of engagement is tended to be used on national models in Wales. Aside from holding meetings generally, there is also specialised project based engagement such as through using a "Youth Select Committee" format. This is used annually in the UK by the UK Youth Parliament when looking at their one national issue but this method is also used by some organisations which were visited on this research trip as it bought the most media attention and political attention to an issue thus raising its profile and getting actions done. The final method which is a possible method for young people to be heard is using 'listening tours' which is when the decision makers or bodies travel across the country to hear first-hand the views of those young people or for the bodies of young people it gives them an opportunity to hear other young people's views as well. The implications of what has been discussed on the UK is that it is again all dependent on the resource capability of the organisation and is dependent on the number of young people for which they want to engage with a suggestion being that a smaller specific number is more beneficial to have a positive impact.

When looking at the structure of a representative body a question that is discussed often is the number of representatives that the body should have. From the research, there was a variety of views which were suggested for this from having the organisation completely open to anyone within a location area to a size of between 25 to 30 as this number helps to provide a safety blanket in the case that they have other commitments on the time when an engagement activity is taking place. Though there are other circumstances where there are much larger organisations which are either

based virtually or there is a fee associated with the young person taking part so can offer such large participation.

The final aspect of the way of working is looking at the term limits of organisations as this can often affect the retention of young people which will be further discussed in the next chapter. During the research, a varied view was held on this ranging from the length of the project, 1 year, 2 years to continuous involvement up until the upper age limit or if before when the young person does not want to be involved, which if the body does not have a maximum number of participants is fine but if it is stopping other engagement a term limit is usually set. This is then followed by if reappointment should be allowed and in most cases, this was not the case as the body's wanted to allow as many young people as possible to participate. This has shown that there is no consensus on this issue and is influenced by other organisational design features.

While much of the bodies researched are carried out by the government directly, there is an opportunity here for the government to support the third sector not just through funding but by looking at ways that civil servants can volunteer their time with it counting towards their continuous professional development in circumstances where it helps others to engage. During the research, this idea was raised as a possible method by the Forum for Young Canadians which have built this relationship with the Canadian Government as a method of building future policy leaders and increasing the knowledge of political processes. It does not just support the organisation by having the staff volunteers but it also means that the participants receive the expertise and insight of the civil servants.

The next aspect which this section is going to cover is looking at if young people should be 'rewarded' for taking part. What is the standard acceptance as a minimum is that no young person should be out of pocket for taking part in youth engagement activities at the national level. This tends to include covering travel costs and food costs. Where some organisations or groups go further is by providing a financial fixed remuneration for their time. An example of where this is done is with the Canadian Prime Ministers Youth Council. While there is the supportive position of this that it is something small for the committed number of hours which they have done in part of their role. While there is the positive there is also some that argue that you may find young people that manage to get through the application process just to receive the payment. Overall, it is neither a definite try and do it this way or not but is down to the culture of the organisation. However, what is more likely to influence this for an organisation or body is if they have the resource to be able to do it. As will be discussed in the next chapter there is forever constraining budgets on youth bodies which is why it will play a key part.

The final aspect is for youth organisations which are thinking of future youth organisational structure is a consultancy based model for organisations in order for them to diversify their way of working but also their operational aspects. This will be discussed within the next chapter mainly but diversifying organisation structure helps for these organisations to future plan.

International Youth Engagement

Now in particular on youth engagement, to get youth engaged it is important for youth and youth organisations to engage with their national ministries to get them to make youth important to begin with so there is much national work to be carried out as there is international. However, specially within the institution there is a repeating view that "Youth are seen as an agent of change" which shows that some in these institutions believe that there is real benefit in involving young people in

their activities and decision-making processes. How they get involved and it what ways that the system could reform to include more young people is the question left to ask!

From the research, there was some suggestion that young people or youth organisations aiming to get an agenda to the attention of a state do as discussed in the previous chapter need to know the framework and resolutions which have passed already at the United Nations as this is likely to allow them to get further support as the states can see where work has already been done. Following this it is again suggested that youth organisations or young people when trying to influence the international arena research the issue which they are presenting on as being able to back up ideas and suggestions with research and evidence it reduces the level of risk to the organisations.

The next method which is suggested young people use in order to make sure that their issues are heard is by using the representatives which the UN have. These include most importantly the UN Secretary Special Envoy on Youth but then there is also other special envoys or rapporteurs such as the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly. By using these representatives, they provide a direct connection into the work of the secretariat of the UN and can help to represent a collective view.

One of the major way's which the United Nations allows or promotes access to young people is through their 'Youth Delegate Programme'. Their Youth Delegate programme is the "inclusion of youth delegates in a country's official delegation to the United Nations General Assembly and various functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council." (United Nations, 2017) This is that the member state supports a young person to attend these events to voice a youth perspective on different issues.

The UK has no formal commitment to supporting young people to engage in the United Nations work through the UN Youth delegate programme and from through previous experience is lead very much so by who the minister of one of the related departments is at that time. Furthermore, in recent times when the UK has participated in the delegate programme they have participated at the minimum level of just taking part in some of the UN General Assembly High Level week and not as other countries have done of having their delegates attend other events UN events throughout the year. However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of this programme has been questioned by some states and there are further questions if this is more of a 'publicity stunt' or is 'lip service'. This view was expanded on by some who felt that promoting the international organisation and boosting the level of education is a better use of the delegation's resources. It is not just to the UN where the UK Government should be including young people in their delegation and them having a meaningful position but it should be to all International Organisations as most topics relate to youth and youth are the ever-forgotten subset of the population.

Finally, while discussing youth engagement in IOs there were some that said that youth need to be diplomatic in their way of engaging with international organisations as that is the way the organisation works. However, there are some members which took part in this research that felt that 'youth should be youth' and be 'bold, creative, innovative and not to be afraid to stir it up a little.' This difference in opinion by actors is interesting to note as when the discussion is more generally about civil society engagement the broad consensus view is that they should be acting diplomatically, yet when young people are involved they change their mind.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is "a legally-binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities." (Save the Children, n.d) This can be further explained through UNICEF comments on it of "Every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status. The Convention must be seen as a whole: all the rights are linked and no right is more important that another. The right to relax and play (Article 31) and the right to freedom of expression (Article 13) have equal importance as the right to be safe from violence (Article 19) and the right to education (Article 28)." (n.d)

While Wales is internationally seen as being a world leader in regard to respecting children rights as "the Welsh Government adopted the Convention as the basis for policy making for children and young people in Wales in 2004. [This was carried further as the Welsh Government introduced the 'Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure'.] The Measure strengthened and built on the rights based approach of the Welsh Government to making policy for children and young people in Wales. It placed a duty on all Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the substantive rights and obligations within the UNCRC and its optional protocols." (Welsh Government, 2015)

So, while Wales is this world leader, it was important to understand in this research project the implication of the UNCRC on the locations which were researched to find out if the UNCRC has such a considerable influence on the methods of youth engagement which different organisations use. Over the research trip what was repeated over multiple of times was that the "UNCRC is fundamental but it is not really talked about or out there, which has meant that young people do not know a lot about it." This shows that even though there is a commitment for states that have ratified it, it is not always carried through yet this is not surprising as many states face the same challenges of developing understanding and motivation from young people to be as interested as states are in trying to promote it. While this is not only states responsibility, through organisations which participated it was also noted that it was fundamental to their work but there is still not the promotion or greater understanding of it. This could be that even though the concepts can be easy to understand, getting the interest into it can be difficult as it is not a 'sexy issue' which gets the 'buy in' from young people as much. However, some areas visited on this trip were trying to improve the knowledge which local young people had by working with local education establishments to develop a curriculum for some fields so that the knowledge is passed down to young people and hopefully a greater understanding can be achieved.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the aspect of the research which is designed to provides a more specialised and specific focus to this research than just being purely focused on civil society. This chapter has really shown how that there is no one specific way for youth engagement to take place and that actually different organisations with different motives and different cultures do have an impact of term length, methods, age range and international methods of engagement.

This has shown that it is important for the organisation to consider a range of factors when thinking of the best methods to use as this is will provide a long-standing reasoning to the type of information which they are able to receive to then impact policy. While it was disappointing not to be able to see any different ways which the UNCRC can be implemented into the UK, it does allow for some general insight to some of the challenges which many states and organisations face when they are promoting the UNCRC to young people. Even though there are some setbacks.

Case Study 5: Youth Secretariat, Canadian Government

The Youth Secretariat within the Canadian Government run's the Prime Ministers Youth Council as well as other networks. The Prime Minister's Youth Council is a group of young Canadians who provide non-partisan advice to the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada on issues of importance to them and to all Canadians. Listening to young people about issues that matter to them is an important commitment of the Canadian Government, As Minister of Youth, the Prime Minister wants to hear directly from young people and the youth council is one mechanism to support the dialogue.

The Prime Ministers Youth Council is made up of 26 members which can have a maximum number of 30 at any one time, who serves a mandate for up to two years with there being no reappointment process. These young people are aged between 16 to 24. Members of the Prime Minister's Youth Council are allocated a fixed remuneration for their time doing Youth Council business. To become a member the young person fills in an application which includes sections for young people to provide background information on their identity, experience and involvement over the last two years in organisations, activities which they have undertaken in their community, their leadership experience, initiatives that they have launched and the total number of hours contributed to the above. After the application, a set of roughly 300 people proceed to the second stage in three different 100 applicant groups. The first 100 applicants are applicants with the highest scores in community engagement in each region of Canada and one region designated for Canadians outside Canada to recognise their engagement efforts. The second set of 100 is made up of randomly selected applicants in order to achieve a broad representation of all applicants. Then the third set of 100 applicants is formed based on diversity indicators, to ensure that those going to the second stage is fully representative of the diversity of Canada. These people are then invited to participate in a video interview and submit resumes online, with references. Once selected, the Youth Council have four meetings a year in a residential setting which is supported by monthly teleconferences to have continuous engagement.

Also to the Youth Council, the Canadian government use a number of other methods to engage with young people on issues which they are passionate about. One way which they do this is that they have around 17,000 young people aged between 16 to 24 and over 200 stakeholders signed up to their newsletter for which the Government got a large number of them to prioritise 5 themes for which further work would be carried out. Furthermore, they use their quarterly newsletter to prioritise meaningful action including significant calls to action.

Find out more: www.canada.ca/en/campaign/prime-ministers-youth-council.html

Case Study 6: Forum for Young Canadians

The Foundation goal is to foster and promote an understanding among young Canadians of the role and function of Canada's three levels of democratic government, while promoting awareness of the meaning of Canadian citizenship. Since its inception the foundation has devoted itself to fostering leadership skills in young Canadians, designed to demystify the political process and helping smart students get their voices heard. Through its various programmes for which the Forum for Young Canadians is one of them, the foundation provides youth, aged 15-19, with first-hand access to the minds, the procedures and the energy of Parliament Hill. It also creates a community among the like-minded leaders of tomorrow.

The programme helps to give participants opportunities to learn about governance, democracy and citizenship; meet with influential figures in Canadian public life, while getting to know other young people with interests similar to their own.

"Made me realize how amazing my country is, and the amazing opportunities out there."
- Jenna, NB

What was clear from this organisation is their view how the networking opportunities is the key aspect as it allows for young people to meet influential actors to become future leaders. This organisation is also one which has a diversified funding formula of government, private and occurs a fee as well.

Find out more: www.forum.ca

Provincial Advocate *for* Children *&* Youth

Case Study 7: Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, Ontario

The Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth ("Advocate's Office") is an independent voice for Ontario's children and youth who are either "in care" or on the margins of government care. Reporting directly to the Legislature, the Provincial Advocate partners with children and youth to elevate their voices and promote action on their issues. The children and youth who fall within the mandate of the Advocate's Office include those who are seeking or receiving services from the children's services sector in areas such as child welfare, youth justice, children's mental health, developmental services and children's treatment services. The jurisdiction of the Office also includes students of the provincial and demonstration schools, youth in court holding cells or being transported to and from court holding cells, First Nations children and youth, and children and youth with special needs.

Guided by the principles of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right to be heard, the Provincial Advocate strives to be a model of meaningful child and youth participation in every aspect of its work.

The Advocates office has used many of the methods discussed ranging from listening tours, creating a youth select committee called 'Our Voice Out Turn' which received significant traction by both the media and the government as a task working group was formulated to look at the issue discussed. The Advocates office also employ young people as 'Youth Amplifiers' as they represent the voice of young people in project work and gives project officers access to young people with lived experience of the issue area and they help to design programmes effectively.

Find out more: www.provincialadvocate.on.ca

NYC™ Department of Youth & Community Development

Case Study 8: Department for Youth and Community Development

The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) invests in a network of community-based organizations and programs to alleviate the effects of poverty and to provide opportunities for New Yorkers and communities to flourish. DYCD supports New York City youth and their families by funding a wide range of high-quality youth and community development programs, including: After School, Community Development, Family Support, Literacy Services, Youth Services and Youth Workforce Development.

During the research DYCD showed a wide range of ways which the city and the department support youth up until the age of 24. DYCD have created a range of opportunities ranging from their Teen Action Programme, Youth Conference, Youth Council. Inter-agency Committee and their cornerstone project. These programmes operate with a diverse population and diverse communities that it shows how programmes can be developed in order to support communities. Some of these programmes are developed in a way to meet the needs and wants of the community they are in.

Find out more: www.nyc.gov/dycd
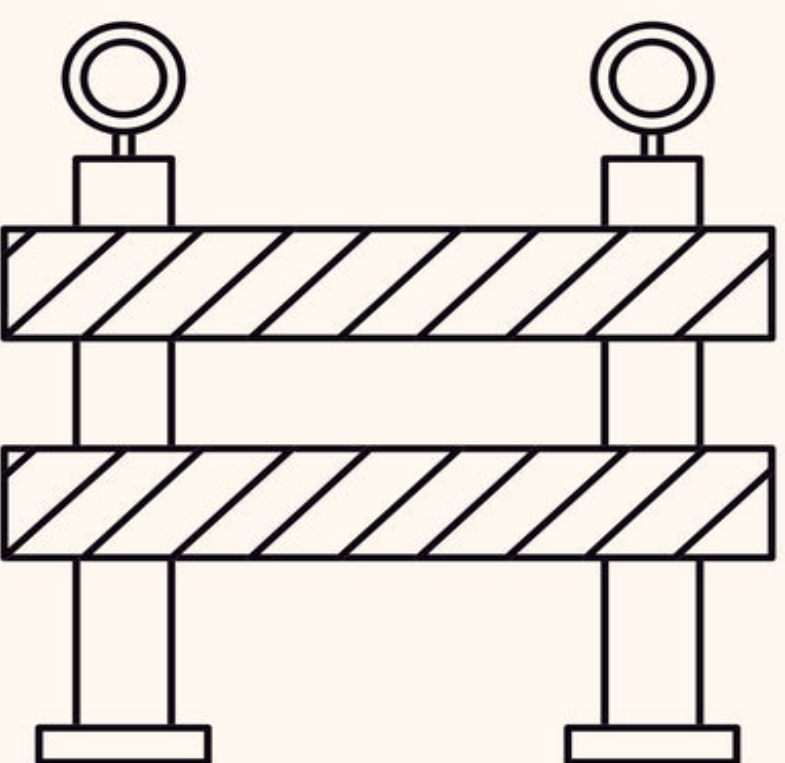
CHAPTER 4: CHALLENGES

Chapter 4: We want to engage but can't …… why?

Introduction

Many National Governments or IOs clearly say that CSOs are key partners and are significant in all their work. However, the concluding chapter of this research report is looking at many of the challenges which exist for civil society organizations in participating in the policy making process weather these are internal bases challenges to more detrimental and difficult ones of IO member states suppressing CSOs from having their voice heard internationally. This chapter is really designed to bring many of the already identified challenges together to show decision makers where there are issues and where action needs to be taken to support and engage civil society. It will be split into four sections, the first being external Challenge's which is regarding the challenges outside of the organisation either in the political sphere or public sphere. The second section will be regarding the working of CSO their selves, the third will be a specific look at the challenges at the UNESCO NGO Committee and the last section will be looking at the challenges facing organisers when looking at youth participation in the policy process. During this chapter, there is going to be some conflict between the suggestions of working methods in previous chapters as it is important in the system of government that CSOs make a decision about what is important to their cause especially as the system is even more interconnected between local, national and international politics and policies.

The Challenges

External Challenges

This section will specifically be looking at the external challenges which many NGOs face when they are carrying out their work. The first challenge which receives a lot of attention is the closing of civil society space internationally and there are also some views that in the UK there is some restricting taking place. This is probably one of the largest challenges faced by any civil society organisation worldwide when engaging in its work which is why it has received a position in this report. The closing civil society space is even noted with the UK as CIVICUS has noted that it is 'narrowing.' (2016a) This is especially true as the comment regarding the UK Government is that "concerns persist about the possibility for the government's counter-extremism policies to have negative consequences on associational life, and around violent policing tactics in the management of public assemblies." (CIVICUS, 2016b) This shows that while CSOs may have the illusion that they do not need to worry about the government cutting down on space, it does need to be classed as an appropriate risk.

Related to this is the politicisation of civil society space that exists which is specifically of concern at the international level as some states try to state that CSO are a part of 'western interventions' and are used as 'western foreign policy tools.' While this is specifically seen as a risk to CSOs internationally, it is also important for domestic actors depending on their topic to think of the potential risk which could be faced.

The next challenge or threat to CSO is the rising level of Authoritarian Governments in Countries which have previously been supportive of civil society engagement as this leads to questions about the sustainability of CSOs across administrations and if major shock occurs is there a way for them to be able to carry on going as the administration can starve the organisation of its access and resources at times. But when this research was carried out a comment which was made was that "We always have the swings in government, it is not a new think and every time Civil Society survive. It is important for Civil Society to find their niche and adapt to the new system of government. This is

the thing that makes them better." This shows how CSO even though they are going through this period of challenge do have the possibility of rising out of it as a stronger organisation as it is important that they plan for the eventuality and carry out a form of 'political monitoring' to measure movement.

The next challenge or risk facing CSO engagement in the policy cycle is that there is a level of citizen distrust or disengagement with politics and politicians in particular. This is particularly relevant as most issues are political so if there is distrust within the system then they may not be engaged with the issue they are trying to get the agenda set for. But a key feature of this could be that there is a lack of public knowledge of the processes which are used by citizens for the decision-making process. So, there is the 'catch twenty-two' situation but this should mean that government and institutions should put effort in to make sure that the public are knowledge how these democratic systems work.

During this research, there was some decision makers that felt that NGO's are misused by states in order to push for a certain agenda. Within this it is important that CSO are independent actors and that they are involved where there is relevance to have them involved and they can make a real impact. However, while CSOs agree that they should be independent actors, there was also a feeling that some States argue that a lot has been achieved already so states believe to continue pushing for further engagement opportunities for civil society there must be a number of conditions which must be agreed.

The next external challenge facing CSOs being able to get their agenda out into the public domain and into policy makers position is the decline in respected journalism and the growth of distrust in media organizations due to the monopolization of them and by also the ever-growing influence of far-right views being reported through the stream. This point is of a challenge to organisations even when there is apparent 'non-bias media' as there is ever a level of bias in press. This causes issues in getting issues promoted when they may not be deemed 'sexy' or exciting enough to receive attention and all issues have to get some true public movement in order to be picked up by decision makers.

Lastly, in the international system there is the challenge or situation which is regarding the political weight which an IO member state is willing to put behind organisations, especially where they are pushing for accreditation where they have been held previously. A greater discussion on this occurs further in this chapter.

CSO Challenges (Internal)
This section looks specifically at the challenges which CSO faces themselves internally and when developing strategic plans for the organisation. The first challenge that is faced by CSOs is that sector is very 'noisy' or busy, which is in relation to that there are multiple organisations within the system focusing on that topic, so there is the competition to get the organisations agenda onto policy makers table. Furthermore, with an ever-increasing level of competition among CSO for policy makers agenda space there is the possible challenge that the CSO may not communicate in the correct manner with decision makers but also with all other key stakeholders. The reason why this is a challenge is due to the nature that if they communicated wrongly then decision makers are less likely to engage with the organisation which reduces the possibility of their agenda receiving the attention which it should have.

The next challenge facing CSOs is that there is conflict on ideas and the best way forward between CSOs but more importantly between CSOs within coalitions as there is always differences in opinions so this then causes potential challenges to CSOs engaging in policy engagement.

There is also the important aspect of the CSO engaging with the public in their work to develop public support for the issue. However, this can cause further issues as the organisation may not be able to translate institutional issues into 'kitchen table ideas' or in other words making the issue 'sexy' so it gets traction. An example of this is raising the issue of genocide and developing public interest. It is important that organisations put some effort into publicity of their cause in a positive light while also being critical so that there is always the way to keep positive support and not overly make the public unhappy with campaigns. This is then connected to talking about issues while also being inspirational citizens and not creating a situation where organisations and too negative constantly as this then reduces the potential support from the public as they always feel that the issue is being given a negative light and not being aspirational.

The next challenge facing civil society organisations is that there is an ever-increasing move of funding cuts both from the government and from the private/ philanthropy sector which is creating further challenges for organisations to be able to carry out their work, especially where it is not likely that they would receive any public support as discussed above. This lack of funding is self-explanatory regarding the impact it would have on its work. A conceivable way of solving this issue is by diversifying their complete portfolio of work to have multiple streams of revenue. Furthermore, to this lack of funding, the funding which is available is now so heavily metric driven that there are such high demands and requirements on CSO to continuously report that this can take away the resource that is needed for the organisation to do its work. It is important to remember the human impact of these organisations work and at times this is more important than the metric impact.

Following on from this there is the question about if civil society organisations have enough technical capacity and expertise to engage with all institutions and especially International Organisations. This is more specifically about them having the expertise to engage in the bureaucracy and working practices of its bodies. This is even more questionable when specifically discussing the capacity of smaller NGOs and if they can engage in all levels of decision makers. This specifically relates to if smaller NGOs who may have very beneficial ideas for the work of International Organisations for example but do not have the resources to have expertise to engage in IOs work. There is an immense importance that all levels of decision makers provide CSO as much information as possible about their working practices in order for them to be able to engage fully without the added pressure of needed to expel more resources. The first identified challenge which could be argued is in confliction to the previous chapters in this report is that CSOs may become too focused on their own states and not on the international situation. This is important as there may be an international discussion which is taking place which will affect state politics and if the organisation necessarily waits until it comes into force in the state then they may of missed out on a strategic benefit to their advocacy work.

The final challenge for this section is all regarding the way that the organisation works on promoting their issue. The issue is the need for the organisation to make a decision between the branding of the organisation or the strategy of the organisations work. This is because as previously discussed there is a need for the organisations to make their issues a kitchen table issue or appealing, so organisations must decide what percentage of their finance they put to branding or advertising and then what they put to their formal work.

United Nations ECOSOC NGO Committee

In continuation from Chapter 2 regarding engaging within in the international sphere and in particular at the United Nations, the best method was by receiving accreditation from the ECOSOC NGO Committee. This committee has been of interest throughout this report which is why it is being discussed further.

There are a number of challenges associated with participation through this committee which have been recognised throughout by the international scholars. The first key challenge is that the member states domestic politics affects the way that they interact and view civil society actors. This is noted in positions that member states that have domestic policies of promoting civil society will transfer this to their membership of the committee, this is also evident for those who are unsupportive. Though this does provide CSO working internationally to easily identify states likely to be supportive.

The next challenge facing participation in this committee at the international level is the fact that the CSO has to devote resources to this form of engagement as it has been previously noted that there is the need for continuous engagement rather than ad-hoc engagement and this obviously has a resource cost. This is important as CSOs are now facing ever more competing challenges internally for resources so CSOs have to deal with the opportunity cost scenario in this circumstance. This is deciding between influence versus operations. This concern may not be relevant to all organisations when their main aim of work is to advocate a change of policy.

The final challenge which has already had attention brought of it throughout this report is the fact that many member states of the committee considers the topic or issue which the organisation works when thinking of accreditation. This is an identified challenge as certain topics such as "Separatism; Terrorism; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Rights; Freedom of Expression; and Human Rights" (Boström, 2011; 3) are all seen as controversial issues as organisations which work in this area are constantly being deferred or objected by the committee. This can cause challenges to organisations working in this field who are trying to receive accreditation to the Human Rights Council to bring attention to the strategic importance of their topic and where there is inconsistency in the implementation of protecting individuals.

When discussing this committee with international actors there is broad consensus that this committee needs to reform and become more accountable in its working methods to meet the international demand for an increase in openness and democratic standards across all IOs. There is a need for reform through placing term limits on membership of the committee so that the committee gets a large number of member states involved which more importantly means that that the number of states that support or oppose a particular view point will change. There is also a need for the committee to have clear guidelines of the processes of the committee and exactly how NGOs can engage with the work of the committee.

Youth Participation

As this report is especially interested in the way young people are engaged in the policy making process to get their voice heard, this section will specifically take note of the challenges which are associated with youth engagement ranging from physical barrier to the need to change the mind set of key stakeholders. While these challenges have been identified specifically for youth engagement many of these challenges can be extended to more general civil society engagement as well.

The first main challenge is the decision maker by in to having young people involved in the policy making process as without decision maker buy in then they won't listen to any suggestions which are

given. This is particularly prevalent when decision makers are used to traditional working methods and have never before engaged young people. This was specifically noted by one actor who stated "sometimes [there is] real opportunity for change but elected members do not like the potential for criticism." While there is no way of solving this issue as even trying to explain the positives of youth engagement is unlikely to sway them, there is still the ability to try and develop interest through newer decision makers to make some movement in to it. Connected to this challenge of engagement is that a power dynamic can occur between the young people and the adults especially within the actual organisation when there is a desire from the young people to lead forward ideas but the cultural norms may exist which stop adults from taking young people's ideas seriously. This is something which has the potential of being addressed by breaking down the barriers and implementing a rolling basis so that both sides get develop good working relationships because it is key that young people are involved in decisions which affect them as supported by Article 12 of the UNCRC.

Moving away from the relationship stage of having positive and engaging youth participation there is also some physical barriers which may stop this. The first one is the rural nature of much of Wales adds its own further challenges in the form of meetings, transport and even communication at times. This rural nature was also relevant in the case study countries visited on this research project with them specifically trying to mitigate this solution by travelling around to engage with the greatest number of young people and by also having the conversations remotely through social media and other fora where there is interest. This however relevant to the motivation for engagement as this then tends to dictate the amount of funding which is available as it can be costly to carry out group engagement. Where there may not be full funding there are times when young people are asked to contribute to covering some costs but the main emphasis all organisations have stated is that it is important to keep the cost to the minimum for the participants. Where there is the challenge as well is where participants are not charged but government funding is 'drying up' all the same, there is a need for organisations to diversify their funding methods so that they act as much as a business in their organisation but without the profit maximisation effect.

Compared to the financial situation regarding these organisations, there is also the fact that to have youth engagement in the policy cycle, you have to have young people to engage with which is a major issue as there is competition between departments. This is because youth engagement at times can be seen as the new and relevant thing to do, all of these departments are competing for roughly the same young people. Furthermore, this is important as there is a need to develop interest and understanding among young people about the ways they can get involved and what they can get out of it as young people are interested they may not know how to find out what is out there. Once there is young people interested in being involved, it is often important to have a limited number to make the engagement process manageable, so there is a need for an 'appointment process'. Different organisations that were engaged with during the research project use a variety of different methods ranging from elections to simple application to a full public appointment process. Each method has their own positives and negatives to using the method which can influence the reason why they are used. Though what is important to note on this is that if a method is being used that is also used for other appointments in government then this can be less able to get young people engaged. This is particularly important if the official public appointment process is followed as this system can be very bureaucratic and not easy to understand for young people. This is then also important when the organisation is trying to get targeted groups engaged or represented on the body as the formal processes remove that type of information available during the application process.

The final aspect regarding the participants is the challenges which can be established regarding the retention of young people in these roles. While it wouldn't be right to necessarily have just the same young people engaged constantly there is still a need to have some level of continuation as otherwise there is an ever-constant need to rebuild knowledge and understanding which then impacts the organisation work and tends to take longer to be able to move on to more substantive policy discussion and to be able to have a greater beneficial impact. While there is no straightforward way to manage or reduce this risk, the organisation should be designed to have some form of rolling basis so that there is still the possibility of some information being retained.

The final challenge to involving young people in the policy engagement cycle is to make sure that there is true engagement and not just lip service provided to young people as when only lip service is given then this is not true engagement and thus ignores the idea about engagement and policy. This then leads to the idea that organisations need to be able to demonstrate the impact which they are having while also having meaningful engagement. A specific aspect of this is that there is an increased demand on organisations to provide impact data or outputs and not just the engagement which might not lead to tangible outcomes.

This is then also related to the 'representation challenge' of policy makers needing to decide really who the young people they have involved represent as it can be a small amount of young people otherwise giving a small level of views. However, where these young people represent a community or sector this then means they can bring more voices into the mix during any deliberations on future policy, thus making it more relevant to all and increasing the basis of accountability.

Conclusion

Overall, this chapter has provided an insight into some of the challenges which CSO face whether they are acting domestically or internationally, however the challenges discussed so far are not the only ones out there but it does show that civil society is going through ever greater challenges each year and there is a need to stand up to some of these challenges so that civil society can stay free. While there is a range of risks or challenges, a major one facing civil society space is the over politicisation of space which then has many larger dangers to it through the geopolitical aspects it has. This can then lead to removing of funding or cutting of access.

Even though there are these external factors at play influencing access, the other major internal factor is the importance of the organisation being able to make their issue a 'kitchen table' issue as these organisations will never be able to gain any amount of public support as without this many policy makers are less likely to see the attractiveness of a policy.

Some of the challenges which have been discussed in this chapter are not fully relevant to UK based organisations but they have been included to the nature of shared learning to reduce the likelihood of that process being followed in organisations and methods.

Case Study 9: International Service for Human Rights

The International Service for Human Rights is an independent, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights. We achieve this by supporting human rights defenders, strengthening human rights systems, and leading and participating in coalitions for human rights change. Our theory of change is founded on a proven formula, supported by over 30 years of research, frontline experience and a record of impact.

ISHR achieves its impact in five ways which include empowering human right defenders, strengthening human rights laws and systems, promoting accountability for violations, securing implementation at the national level and building powerful partnerships for change.

In relation to this research project the ISHR carry out fantastic work in relation to UNESCO NGO Committee and urging for further advances of NGOs but also in providing advice and guidance to those applying regarding best practice and other best methods for working. As well as providing advice and guidance, the ISHR co-hosts and run events urging for an improvement in human right defender's situation.

Find out more: www.ishr.ch

Case Study 10: Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities

The Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities is a permanent, advisory body to government. This advisory council has a membership of 25 youth, young professionals and other community leaders from a variety of cultures, communities and backgrounds. The council gives advice to the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Children and Youth Services on issues affecting youth, including how the government can improve programs and services for youth. Council members also talk to youth in their home communities to help government initiatives better reflect the needs of all young people across the province.

"Improving outcomes for youth will only happen if we work together to address the challenges they face growing up in this province. As the council meets and engages with young people across Ontario, we are reminded of the importance of providing advice to shape how the government pursues its priorities. It's a privilege to be part of this dialogue – I encourage others to take on this challenge too!" - Muhammad Zaman, Member

In Ontario, they have a policy called 'Stepping Up' and 'Stepping Stones' which are their policies which involved young people in its development. Stepping up is the first-of-its-kind roadmap for Ontario that helps their government and partners, step up and do more.

Within Stepping up they pay some particular emphasis about informing young people and others about youth rights and the importance of young people being able to have a say on things which affect them. This clearly shows that that there has been some thought into youth leading change. The Stepping Up document shows how there has been a strategic importance to involving young people in a variety of ways om service delivery.

Find out more: www.ontario.ca/page/about-premiers-council-youth-opportunities

Conclusion

Involving CSO and Young People in the Policy making process require both a further engagement from those in civil society but more importantly greater engagement from those policy makers to engage with relevant organisations and to embed that learning in to their work. When

This report has attempted to bring together information from the five main objectives which was to understand a range of factors from the challenges, the role of young people, motivation, examples of practice and understanding the impact of the UNCRC on organisations work. This report has helped to begin the discussion into answering many of the questions raised about the way that civil society can participate in the policy making process. However, it was not always simple to answer many of the questions due to the nature of the international system.

It was generally clear that the motivation of policy makers to engage with CSO and young people I the policy making process at national level was largely down to the historic environment of the country where decision makers are trying to 'right a wrong', but at the international level it is much more the fact that these organisations can provide a first-hand account of what is happening. With CSO the key motivation is that there is the belief that decision makers should not be the only voice heard and that CSO have a lot to offer in terms of knowledge and expertise.

This research Fellowship has presented several different methods which organisations use to engage with decision makers ranging from direct engagement with states, to raising issues by creating coalitions to work better together. It is difficult to identify key conclusions for methods except the recurring factor of the need for CSO to work together either in coalitions or just more informally to have influence, this is then followed by making sure that you make it targeted for those decision makers you are working with, whether this is a budget controller who would be interested in the cost implication or a politician who is interested in the impact it will have to their local constituency.

Out of the considerable number of challenges which civil society actors face in completing their work, the recurring factors which play an important significance is that of lack of resource, followed by the over politicisation of the space they operate in and then finally it is about making an issue one which is widely discussed in the public sphere. Some of the issues discussed in the chapter can be resolved with some commitment from actors, however many of them would require a change in states foreign policy behaviour or a much wider commitment to external organisations in a time when many states are cutting non-essential spending.

Many of the findings raised in this report allow for some further investigation on a UK context on the ways which UK civil society organisations can use the methods discussed to critically evaluate and think about the way that they carry out their work. From the recommendations presented in this report they solely focus on methods as this is where there are opportunities to make the greatest impact.

Overall, this report has proved an insight into the policy making process and ways which civil society organisations can engage with decision makers. There is still more to learn about the most successful methods of engagement but there would be a need for greater access to be granted by those decision makers to gather further concrete data. For the findings in this report to gain traction there needs to be further engagement with policy makers and decision makers for them to realise the positive role that civil society has had in the policy making process. But this cannot be left to policy makers alone, there is the need for civil society groups to campaign to decision makers for further access.

Recommendations

- For a 'knowledge hub' to be created to support, share and publish, all organisation size, research for it to gain further traction.
- For enhancements to be made of CSO using innovative technology (such as VR) to promote their agenda and to gain wider interest in the topic.
- For the UK Government to consider and investigate ways of increasing the level of citizen and youth voices in its work with International Organisations. (e.g. through full commitment to the Youth Delegate Programme)
- For the Government to investigate ways that Civil Servants can be utilised to support youth understanding and engagement in the policy process.
- For institutions to provide information about their working practices in an open environment so that organisations are of the best ways to engage with those bodies.

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