



Center for Nonprofit Strategies

Clear Actionable Advice.

Advocacy for Impact: Lessons from Six Successful Campaigns

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was prepared for Aspen Institute's Global Interdependence Initiative (GII). It provides insights from six bold advocacy campaigns that have greatly enhanced the United States' contribution to global poverty reduction and health promotion.

Four of these six campaigns were successful policy advocacy efforts¹ that led to:

- The passage of the Jubilee Debt Relief Bill of 2000
- The creation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in 2003
- The passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act of 2004 (AGOA-III)
- The creation of the Millennium Challenge Account in 2004

The other two campaigns were studied for the learning they offer in specific areas. They are:

- The ongoing campaign to promote the *Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)*, the world's first legally binding international public health treaty aimed at reducing global tobacco consumption.
- The *Better Safer World Campaign*, a pilot public awareness and education campaign conducted in November 2003 in Des Moines, Iowa.

We studied campaign documents and reports and interviewed 22 advocates and observers who were closely associated with them to uncover the inner workings of these efforts, identify the shared attributes of these campaigns and abstract some general lessons from those commonalities. This report presents the results of our analysis. It is intended to provide guidance, not prescriptions. None of the factors discussed in the report can be regarded as necessary for success; indeed, one of the main themes in the data is that there is a range of possible solutions to most of advocacy's vexing challenges.

Key Findings

Factors in Success

- *Planning, execution and luck.* Legislative successes result from the convergence of several factors, some planned and some serendipitous. A host of external, uncontrollable factors, including timing and luck, influence the outcome of any organization's (or coalition's) lobbying efforts. Issues gather momentum over time and advocacy is most successful when it is able to spearhead this momentum and tip the scales in favor of a particular course of action. During a campaign, advocacy efforts may receive help from unlikely quarters or may be impacted by entirely unpredictable events or forces. However, having a good strategic framework helps advocates make the best of new opportunities that might present themselves and to anticipate and avoid some of the pitfalls.

¹ Advocacy, in general terms, can be defined as disseminating information intended to influence individual behavior or opinion, corporate conduct, or public policy and law. In this paper, we are defining policy advocacy as efforts to promote the legislation and execution of certain laws by targeting policymakers. Four of the six campaigns we studied can be described as successful policy advocacy efforts because they led to the passage of bills promoted by the advocates. A fifth—the Framework Convention—is an ongoing policy advocacy campaign.



Structuring Coalitions

- *Broad, bipartisan reach.* Pulling together a broad coalition with bipartisan reach can help a campaign in many ways, provided the coalition maintains a strategic coherence and commonality of purpose. Some of the benefits of having a broad coalition are:
 - It adds credibility to the effort and gets attention. Having supporters on both sides of the political aisle or from very different constituencies can elevate an issue above partisan politics.
 - Organizations with diverse perspectives highlight different facets of the issue and increase its overall relevance and significance.
 - Diverse opinions within the coalition enable it to formulate a more balanced policy agenda that is politically more acceptable.
 - Because advocacy organizations from different parts of the political spectrum bring different relationships and resources to the table, a diverse coalition can reach a wider range of policymakers.
- *Trust and Respect.* An ideologically diverse organization can be difficult to manage. These case studies suggest that philosophical differences among coalition members can be managed if participant organizations respect the integrity and motives of other members, value the ultimate goal and believe that it can be attained through the coalition. In addition, respondents noted that having open debate, transparent decision-making processes, skilled and passionate leadership, and the opportunity for member organizations to learn from each other also contribute to the strength of a coalition.
- *Common ground for success.* The coalitions that executed these campaigns were structured and formalized to different degrees. Regardless of the structure of the coalition, early work done to get all participants on the same page philosophically and strategically seems to be crucially important. Given enough time and mutual trust, a group can often find a way to converge around a rough policy agenda. Once that happens, tactical coordination is relatively easy and can be highly effective.

Planning and Evaluation

- *Flexible strategies.* Although some key decisions were made early in the campaign, these coalitions mostly followed a loose, reactive, and flexible agenda. During their initial discussions, members spent considerable time on developing a shared perspective and finding common ground to orient their efforts. This common ground provided a strategic space for the group. Within this framework, the coalition could respond cohesively to changes in the environment, take on different roles and adapt priorities and tactics as the political situation evolved. Given the nature of policy advocacy, maintaining some flexibility of roles, objectives and tactics may work better for a coalition than having a set plan of action.
- *Executing against the "ask".* At the tactical level, the work of these coalitions was closely planned and coordinated. This included developing a list of legislators who need to be reached, identifying who is best-positioned to reach them, following a coordinated timetable for advocacy events and efforts, and monitoring progress as each targeted legislator was won over. This action plan was typically guided by individuals within the coalition who understood how laws are made and how best to influence the process.
- *Playing to individual strengths.* Despite this methodical approach, there was plenty of room for independent action. Representatives of coalition member organizations met periodically, updated each other on their work, and decided whether to approach specific policymakers individually or jointly. But there was no dominant central authority or rigid



blueprint dictating the process. Rather than following a formally laid out plan, members of organizations acted according to their best hunches based on available information and then refined and adapted their activities based on shared results.

- *Informal shared feedback.* Except for the Better Safer World campaign, none of these campaigns undertook a formal, summative evaluation of their work. Informally, however, there was almost constant assessment of progress toward tactical targets such as achieving the support of certain constituencies or lawmakers, attracting a certain number of people to an event, generating a certain number of letters, etc. This feedback was shared with coalition members and helped the entire group plan its next tactics.

Messages and Framing

- *Reframing the debate.* These campaigns highlight the benefits of reframing and repositioning issues to create a perceptual shift in the audience's mind. They urged the public, the media and policymakers to see the issue in a different way, through a different lens. This new perspective emphasized different aspects of the issue, leading people to the desired conclusions and actions.
 - The Jubilee movement repositioned debt relief as a religious and moral imperative, rather than an economic problem to be debated by experts.
 - Global AIDS relief advocates helped people see AIDS as a global emergency that threatens entire communities and nations, not just a few "morally lax" people.
 - Advocates for AGOA merged the dialogue on trade and aid by asking policymakers to consider this trade bill as a way of expressing and promoting American values.
 - The Framework Convention expands the scope of tobacco as a health issue by linking anti-tobacco measures to economic progress, national pride, environmental protection and good governance.
 - The Better Safer World campaign positioned international development aid as an essential investment in our own security and prosperity, rather than a charitable contribution.
 - The engagement of the nonprofit sector in the MCA has introduced new perspectives on poverty reduction and community participation into the debate on the effectiveness of international aid.

In many cases, these new messages represented a perceptual shift for advocates as well as legislators. The various groups lobbying on these issues were able to get past their own agendas and agree upon a broad, common vision and message theme that captured the imagination of a critical mass of constituents and policymakers.

- *Inspiring visions and hard facts.* Most of these campaigns used a powerful combination of moral messages and pragmatic, research-based arguments. Advocates framed their vision and perspective in strong moral terms; but they also anticipated their audiences' objections and arguments and countered them with hard facts and solid information presented in ways that could be heard.
- *Know your audience.* In all the legislative campaigns we studied, the "ask" and the rationale for it were tailored to the political climate at the White House and the Hill. Messages and arguments were based on rigorous policy research, but available facts were interpreted based on advocates' knowledge of the current mood and concerns of policymakers. Similarly, when information was presented to the public, it was presented in accessible and acceptable language.



Working the system

- *Know the system.* Each of the four legislative campaigns we studied was heavily influenced by individuals who understood the inner workings of Congress and Administration and knew how to “play the lobbying game.” They understood the political realities that policymakers faced and worked within those parameters to secure their support. Whenever possible they used political forces and processes to their advantage.
- *Neutralizing roadblocks.* Some interview respondents noted the importance of crafting and promoting “sellable” policies. Rather than present their case and perspective to lawmakers, some of these coalitions prepared draft legislation that balanced different perspectives and included elements that would appeal to both parties. This pragmatic stance increased the chances that the coalition’s proposals would be incorporated, *in toto*, into a legislative proposal. Respondents noted that adopting a pragmatic stance and sacrificing some potentially controversial elements of one’s agenda is worthwhile if it increases the chances that the overall agenda will get implemented.
- *Access is important.* Although all movements have roles for both outsider organizations (that challenge lawmakers and agitate against the status quo) and insider organizations (that advise and inform lawmakers), many of the people we interviewed noted the value of having access to decision-makers, or at least having an ally in the decision-making circles. This lesson seems to be particularly important for left-leaning organizations, many of whom adopted a more pragmatic and open stance to negotiate a conservative legislature and administration.

Other findings

- *Strong organizational commitment helps.* All the campaigns we studied were among their organizations’ top priorities for the year, suggesting that organizational focus may be related to advocacy success. By using available advocacy resources strategically, an organization can have a larger impact on an issue. At the inter-organizational level, coordinating advocacy priorities appears to have served NGOs well in pushing through bolder initiatives. When many NGOs focus on a particular issue *at the same time*, it is much more likely to get the attention of policymakers.
- *Time(ing) is of the essence.* Using external milestones to create a sense of urgency around the issue can also contribute to campaign success. Some respondents noted that advocacy on global development issues should be timed around key international events, when international concerns are top-of-mind for legislators and Administration officials.
- *It’s not a numbers game.* These case studies also suggest that, in some cases, strategic and targeted grassroots activism can be as effective as creating a “mass movement.” In other words, advocates do not always have to get a lot of people engaged in an issue. Rather, they have to activate a critical core of supporters to lobby their legislators, thereby convincing legislators that the issue has traction amongst their constituents.
- *Celebrities can help.* Some respondents observed that a dedicated, informed and intelligent celebrity can do wonders for a cause. Celebrities can call attention to an issue; they can mobilize their fan base; and they sometimes have extraordinary access to policymakers. However, most interview respondents cautioned against relying excessively on celebrities to promote policies.



INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

The Aspen Institute's Global Interdependence Initiative (GII) hosts a project called the Evaluation Learning Group (ELG), co-organized with the Communications Consortium Media Center. The ELG's goal is to help advocates concerned with foreign policy issues—particularly global health and development issues—understand what kinds of advocacy activities are most effective in the current political and social climate.

Although most of us realize that advocacy is more art than science, art too can benefit from a systematic analysis of what works. The purpose of this project is to narrow the range of uncertainty that surrounds advocacy planning and make advocacy easier for policy advocates and their donors. In this report, we provide insights from six advocacy campaigns that have yielded exceptional results and laid the groundwork for future initiatives.²

Not all these campaigns achieved all their policy objectives—indeed most advocates see their achievements on these campaigns as initial milestones rather than end points of their efforts. However, each one of these campaigns has succeeded in dramatically reframing the conversation and debate around a particular aspect of the United States' role in global poverty reduction and health promotion.

Moreover, all these campaigns have been important learning experiences for international aid and development NGOs. They have learned to lobby effectively and work in coalitions, and have used these issues to strengthen their constituent base. These campaigns have built capacity and confidence, and forged relationships that will be useful in future efforts.

Methodology

This report is based on an analysis of six campaigns. Four of these were successful legislative campaigns, i.e. they involved advocacy to influence the passage of a specific bill. Of the others, one was a pilot public outreach and education campaign and the other is an ongoing grassroots advocacy campaign.

The four successful legislative campaigns that are analyzed in this report are:

- The passage of the Jubilee Debt Relief Bill of 2000
- The creation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in 2003
- The passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act of 2004 (AGOA-III)
- The creation of the Millennium Challenge Account in 2004

In studying these campaigns, our goal was to uncover and reconstruct the "behind-the-scenes" advocacy activity and other events that led to these policy initiatives, all of which have greatly enhanced the scope and nature of the United States' role in global development and poverty alleviation.

The other two campaigns were studied for the learning they offer in specific areas. They were:

² The authors of this report, Purnima Chawla and Ravi Singh, would like to thank all the people who agreed to be interviewed for this report and shared their knowledge and experiences with us. In addition, we are thankful to Carolyn Long and Julia Coffman for their insightful comments and contributions, and to David Devlin-Foltz for guiding and facilitating every step of the project.



- The ongoing campaign to promote the *Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)*, the world's first legally binding international public health treaty aimed at reducing global tobacco consumption. The treaty was negotiated by the 192 members of the World Health Organization, has been signed by 168 countries and ratified by 61 countries of the world. It has been strongly influenced and actively promoted by the Framework Convention Alliance, a well-linked international network of more than 200 NGOs. The ongoing work of these NGOs offers important lessons in how US-based NGOs can participate in a global response to health and development issues.
- The *Better Safer World Campaign*, a pilot public awareness and education campaign conducted in November 2003 in Des Moines, Iowa. This campaign was a collaborative public outreach effort by nine major NGOs in the field of international poverty reduction. It successfully used a combination of media and grassroots organizing to raise awareness of and stated support for international aid and development issues. In addition to lessons about the relative efficacy of specific outreach tactics, this campaign was studied to learn how collaboration among NGOs should be structured and managed.

We studied publicly available documents about these campaigns, and interviewed 22 people who were close actors or observers of these efforts. (See appendix A for the list of people who were interviewed for this study.) All interviews were conducted by trained researchers following a loosely structured interview guide (see Appendix B). The guide was designed to cover the following topics:

- The ways in which these efforts were successful and what still remains to be done
- The range of actors, and the degree to which their efforts were coordinated
- The key messages and tactics
- The main opposition they faced
- How the effort was planned and evaluated
- Factors that contributed to success
- Main lessons for future policy efforts

All interviews were taped to ensure that the information would be accurately reported. Detailed interview notes (based on the tapes) were then analyzed to uncover themes in the data.

Organization of the Report

The findings of our research are presented in two parts. In Section I we discuss the main themes in the data and use the six case studies to illustrate them. These themes represent the lessons learned from these cases and are offered for consideration as readers plan their own campaigns.

In Section II, we briefly present the "stories" of the six cases. These are intended to serve as background information for the analysis, but are also complete case studies that make for interesting reading. Readers who are unfamiliar with these campaigns may wish to read these stories before reading the analysis presented in Section I.



SECTION I: DECONSTRUCTING SUCCESS

The last five years have seen a dramatic rise in internationally focused philanthropic activity. According to *Giving USA*, while overall giving remained essentially flat from 2002 to 2003, giving in the area of international affairs rose 12.1 percent. In our interviews, we observed a sense of confidence and energy among international development advocates, a sense that global health and development issues are finally getting attention and the belief that big, dramatic policy initiatives are now possible.

More importantly, many respondents identified the last five years as a time of prodigious learning and rapid capacity building that will enhance their effectiveness and impact in the years to come. The six campaigns discussed in this report played an important role in the learning and capacity enhancement that has advanced this sector. In this section, we highlight common themes and ideas that emerged from our study of these six campaigns.

Smart *and* Lucky

Each one of the four legislative successes discussed in this report represents the convergence of several factors, some planned and some serendipitous— a “perfect storm” of forces and influences. One of the main lessons of this study is that the outcome of any one organization’s (or coalition’s) advocacy is not completely predictable, let alone controllable. Any one campaign is only part of the picture; a number of other influences need to fall into place to tip the scales in favor of a piece of legislation.

Time is one important factor that determines the outcome of advocacy. As social change theorists have argued, there are stages in every political and social movement and most issues percolate for a while until the time is ripe for action. To Hugo’s thought that “nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come”, we might add that “nothing gets done until its time comes.”

Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come (and nothing gets done until its time comes).

In retrospect, there was a decided inevitability to these four pieces of legislation; they were ideas whose time had come. They had all been gradually gathering momentum among policymakers. And most of them stood on the shoulders of other important initiatives, even if some of those initiatives were regarded as failures by advocates. For example, even though the HIPC initiatives were criticized by the NGO community, they paved the way for future debt relief efforts. Similarly, earlier AIDS bills (e.g. the Kerry-Frist Bill in the Senate and Barbara Lee’s bill in the House) that were not passed made PEPFAR possible. Successful advocacy efforts tend to be well-timed in that they generate the final push that tips the scales. It seems to be the nature of advocacy that successes are seldom cause for unalloyed joy and failures really are stepping stones to success.

Luck matters too. Advocacy efforts often receive support from unlikely quarters and may be scuttled by entirely unpredictable events or forces. For example, PEPFAR would likely not have been created without evangelical Christian organizations taking up the issue, something that AIDS activist organizations could not have planned. Neither could they have envisioned that Senator Frist’s trips to Africa would convert him into a strong supporter who would influence the President and Republican lawmakers to push for meaningful AIDS relief.



Elements of Effective Campaigns

Although the role of luck should not be under-estimated, neither should the importance of running a good advocacy campaign. While it is possible to fall short of your policy objectives even if you run a terrific campaign, the chances of being successful are much greater if you do. Here we discuss some attributes that characterize most or all of these campaigns and appear to have contributed to their success. We believe they provide guidance, or, at the very least, food for thought as NGOs and funders plan new advocacy initiatives.

A word of caution: this report is based on limited data and is intended to provide guidance, not prescriptions. None of the factors we discuss can be regarded as necessary for success; indeed, one of the main themes in the data is that there is a range of possible solutions to most of advocacy's vexing challenges. This section aims to sensitize advocates to these challenges and illustrate some possible solutions.

Broad Coalitions with Bipartisan Reach

All four legislative advocacy campaigns described in this report were implemented by broad coalitions that typically brought together organizations from the left and the right, and targeted both Democratic and Republican policymakers. Thanks to bipartisan engagement, these issues came to be seen as above partisan wrangling. Interview respondents acknowledged that the Samaritan's Conference on AIDS organized by Rev. Franklin Graham and the support of conservative Senator Jesse Helms lifted the issue of AIDS out of the progressive camp and made it a bi-partisan concern. Similarly, the Jubilee movement was able to attract and represent both conservative and liberal church-goers. The passage of AGOA III, too, was helped by the fact that progressive and conservative poverty-reduction groups came together with business interests to advocate for the bill.

The bipartisan approach is also evident in whom these coalitions targeted. Rather than appeal to Senators and Representatives who were most likely supporters of the issue, most of these groups systematically targeted the bipartisan leadership of the relevant Congressional committees and sub-committees. Indeed, in some cases, they focused their efforts on those who were most likely to oppose these bills.

Our research suggests that pulling together a broad, bipartisan coalition can help a campaign in many ways.

- First and foremost, it adds credibility to the effort and gets attention.
- Second, it highlights many different facets of the issue and increases its relevance and significance.
- Third, it allows the coalition to formulate a policy agenda that balances different perspectives and is politically more acceptable.
- Finally, advocacy organizations from different parts of the political spectrum bring different contacts and resources to the table, making it possible for the coalition to target a wider range of policymakers.

A movement that won the support of both U2's Bono and Republican Sen. Jesse Helms must have something going for it.
— From an article about the Jubilee movement in *Christianity Today*

Managing Differences

On the flip side, an ideologically diverse organization can be more difficult to manage. These case studies suggest that philosophical differences among coalition members can be managed as long as participant organizations respect the integrity and motives of other



members, value the ultimate goal and believe that it can be attained through the coalition. In each of the coalitions we studied, there were ongoing tensions between radical and pragmatic groups, insider and outsider organizations, and religious and secular groups. The following factors helped hold these coalitions together:

Common Purpose. These coalitions came together around a common goal that was of significant value to each participating organization. In each case, member organizations were fired by the promise of a bold, shared policy objective that dwarfed their differences. They were also energized by the sense that their goal is achievable in the near future, and that it can best be achieved through the coalition. In all these cases, there were no significant NGO organizations opposing or competing with these groups.³

[On MCA] the big glue factor is that everyone wants to see more money for development assistance.

— Interview Respondent

Common Ground. Despite philosophical differences, most members of these groups were able to converge around certain agreed objectives, norms and principles. In three of the four cases—MCA, PEPFAR and AGOA III—the coalition was able to present a unified policy agenda. In the case of the Jubilee coalition, the group worked out a way to deal with disagreement. The larger Jubilee 2000/USA group focused on broad public outreach while its Public Policy Committee advocated for a specific bill.

Open, transparent processes. Several interview respondents noted that active debate and transparent decision-making processes are important for keeping coalition members committed and engaged. Coalition members need to be genuinely interested in discussing the issues and finding common ground. While most of these coalitions had philosophical differences, none appeared to be bogged down by power and turf struggles.

Skilled and passionate leadership. More than processes, it is people that hold coalitions together. These coalitions tended to be organized as a focused core surrounded by a wider group of supporters. The passion, leadership and skill of individuals at the core appear to have been crucial for holding the coalition together. These individuals had the knowledge and skill to provide strategic direction and decide how best to use the resources of the extended membership. They also played a very important role in maintaining the coalition by constantly reminding other members of their common goals and by making participation in the coalition useful and stimulating for members.

It really is about the individuals involved—they are the ones who really make or break advocacy campaigns.

— Interview Respondent

Even if there is no formal coalition to support an advocacy effort, having individual “connectors” to initiate and coordinate disparate efforts can create synergies among them. Some of our interview respondents attributed success to one or two individuals who had the vision, energy, contacts and/or advocacy skill to bring the right people together and push the initiative through.

Learning from others. Some respondents reported that participation in a diverse coalition was also valuable as a learning experience. For example, one person felt that the presence

³ It is worth noting that AGOA I faced a long and bitter legislative battle in which NGOs were initially aligned on both sides of the bill. The main bone of contention here was the bill’s initial “trade, not aid” orientation, which alarmed progressive NGOs. However, eventually, progressive and faith-based conservative NGOs were able to work together to lobby for the bill’s passage and alter it to reflect a “trade and aid” policy position.



of pragmatic, bottom-line oriented business groups in the AGOA coalition helped all coalition members think and work a little more efficiently.

Structure and Coordination

Every coalition grapples with questions about how formally it should be structured and how tightly member organizations' efforts should be controlled. These case studies suggest that there is a wide range of workable solutions to these problems.

The Better Safer World campaign is an example of a completely centralized decision-making process. The nine organizations that participated in this campaign worked together to determine their strategies and tactics. The program was implemented by a dedicated staff, with some staff members seconded from participating NGOs. While there was some collaboration between the campaign and local activities and chapters of member NGOs, it remained separate from them. In essence, this program was run like a separate organization, with the representatives of the nine member NGOs serving on a steering committee to chart its path.

The work of the AGOA III Action Committee was also fairly structured and coordinated. The group had clear rules about the roles of different organizations and a highly targeted and organized policy advocacy campaign was implemented to cover all the relevant players in limited time. This group did not have a centralized staff and member NGOs were charged with implementing tasks assigned to them, sometimes individually and sometimes with other members of the group.

The Jubilee 2000 campaign appeared to be two movements occurring simultaneously. On the one hand was the large and evolving membership of the Jubilee 2000/USA coalition whose grassroots activism aimed at broad debt relief. This campaign used the brand of the international Jubilee campaign and there was some exchange of information and ideas with global Jubilee groups, but its policy agenda and activities were largely independent of international efforts. Within the coalition, the seven religious and quasi-religious organizations that participated on the campaign's Public Policy Committee formed a tighter, more cohesive group. These organizations conducted a highly coordinated and strategic lobbying effort around a specific bill. These members met regularly, exchanged information, conducted joint advocacy meetings, and pooled their resources to maximize their impact.

InterAction took primary responsibility for managing and coordinating the MCA coalition. One of the main unifying factors in this coalition was the framework of the proposed policy itself—by ruling out earmarks for specific problems or projects, it forced NGOs to look past their individual policy agendas and focus on creating an effective mechanism for delivering aid. The fact that this kind of thinking was new territory for everyone made coalition meetings a useful opportunity to learn from other groups. In this case, the participants conducted some advocacy work together and some for their own organizations; however, member organizations appreciated the power of speaking in a unified voice when representing the coalition.

Advocacy efforts for PEPFAR appear to be somewhat less tightly coordinated. A large number of organizations were working on PEPFAR and their interactions were largely informal and focused on exchanging information and ideas. Until 2002-03, the tensions among these groups were large enough that they could not agree to a common policy agenda and tended to throw their support behind one or other bill making its way through Congress. That changed somewhat after the Kerry-Frist bill got mired in Conference, and



more than 70 organizations signed on to a common platform demanding Presidential leadership and a need-based budget to tackle AIDS.

The structure of the Framework Convention Alliance offers a unique combination of flexibility and cohesiveness. The 200-plus NGOs that make up the Alliance function as a kind of global structured network. The group is linked via a secure website and regularly discusses information, strategies and tactics. However, each member NGO is free to pursue an agenda and create an identity that fits its local situation. At key international meetings, the group coalesces around unified messages and tactics and speaks with one voice. Advocates represent the Alliance as a whole, not their individual organizations. One respondent noted that the diversity and independence of member organizations is actually a strength that makes the Alliance's combined voice and message more effective and powerful.

All these arrangements offer their own challenges. The main issue in a centralized structure like the Better Safer World campaign is that seeking consensus on all strategic and operational decisions takes a long time. To mitigate this problem, the campaign set up an Executive body and granted its Chair the authority to make some of the day-to-day decisions. Another problem was that because campaign staff was on loan from member organizations, the lines of authority and accountability tended to get confused. Also, because individual staff members were seconded on a rolling basis, the lack of continuity in staffing became an issue.

On the other side of the spectrum, a coalition that is structured too loosely may not be able to pool resources and ideas in an optimal way. Even in the four successful legislative campaigns, some interview respondents felt that the work of some coalition members was undermined by others. Within the Jubilee coalition, for example, some of the member organizations regarded the limited policy ask of the Jubilee Public Policy Committee as a sellout. The working group on the MCA worked hard to develop an "umbrella" agenda that all or most members could agree with, but had to give individual organizations room to "tack on" their specific concerns to it. When there was a discrepancy among the coalition's policy position and that of member organizations, dissenting organizations were free to present their point of view but had to identify it as such.

Regardless of the structure of the coalition, early work done to get all participants on the same page philosophically and strategically seems to be crucial. Some basic decisions (such as which groups will be invited to join the coalition and how the policy agenda will be set) must be made early to set the tone for the work of the coalition and clarify members' roles and responsibilities. Given enough time and mutual trust, the group can often find a way to converge around a rough policy agenda. Once that happens, tactical coordination is relatively easy and can be highly effective. All the groups we studied reported coordination and support at the tactical level, free and frank exchange of information and ideas, and an effort to split tasks among member organizations based on their strengths, resources and inclination.

Lots of work needs to be done up front to establish a jointly owned advocacy agenda and, consequently, the engagement of participating groups. This pays off in time savings later on.

— Interview Respondent



Planning and Evaluation

One of our hypotheses was that systematic planning and evaluation would be identified as important contributors to campaign success. Planning is indeed important; but our study also yielded some interesting findings about the kinds of planning and evaluation processes that were used in these campaigns.

Strategy as pattern and perspective

In his book *Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*⁴, Henry Mintzberg differentiates between strategy *formulation* and strategy *formation*. The former is a formal, goal-driven planning process, where an organization's actions and programs directly derive from higher level goals and strategies. The latter sees strategy as a pattern or theme that surfaces organically as the many parts of an organization respond to the environment. Mintzberg argues that the business world's obsession with formal planning—i.e. strategy formulation—at the expense of strategy formation limits creative strategic thinking. He goes on to note that, although strategy is usually seen as a path to a goal, it can also mean an organizational *perspective*, i.e. a way of doing things or thinking about them.

Mintzberg's concepts of strategy as perspective and organic strategy formation apply especially well to the kind of strategic thinking that guided these campaigns. Although some key decisions were made early in the campaign, these coalitions mostly followed a loose, reactive, and flexible agenda. It appears that most of these coalitions spent some time to develop a shared perspective and find common ground to orient their efforts. This common ground provided a strategic space for the group. Even if no formal strategy was articulated, coalition members had a clear sense of the group's objectives and how they could contribute to them.

Defining this strategic space gives coalitions flexibility of action, which is useful because the role and objectives of the coalition can change over the course of a campaign. As an example, the NGO effort to shape the MCA started out as an educational effort to help Congress understand how aid can be delivered effectively. The campaign provided information but also made some recommendations regarding how the MCA should be structured. While the campaign's initial focus was on developing eligibility criteria for the MCA funds, it soon realized that it could make a more significant contribution by re-focusing the Account on poverty reduction goals and promoting civic participation in how this money was spent. During the campaign it also became apparent that the MCA might siphon money from other development accounts; so, maintaining funding for these other mechanisms became an advocacy priority for the coalition. Even though the agenda and priorities of the coalition changed during the campaign, all members worked together to advocate for similar priorities at any given time.

The Better Safer World campaign—the only public-focused outreach and education campaign in this set—was different from the other campaigns studied in that it did have a structured planning process. Representatives of the nine member organizations, the Campaign Director, the Executive of the Campaign Committee, and some invited guests participated in regular planning meetings to chart the course of the campaign. The first few meetings were dedicated to defining the objectives and mission of the coalition; discussing its relationship to other organizations in the field; and getting agreement on the basic structure and messages of the campaign. The campaign then hired an advertising agency to

⁴ Mintzberg, H. (1994) *Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*. New York: Free Press



conduct audience research and execute their vision. The campaign organizers who were interviewed for this study advised that work done early in the relationship to establish a common vision for the coalition is critical for efficient decision-making later in the campaign.

Planned Tactics

Most of these coalitions used a more structured process to plan and coordinate their tactics. This included developing a list of legislators who need to be reached, identifying who is best-positioned to reach them, following a coordinated time-table for advocacy events and efforts, and monitoring progress as each targeted legislator was won over. This action plan was typically guided by individuals within the coalition who understood how laws are made and how best to influence the process.

However, there was plenty of room for independent action in these efforts. Representatives of coalition member organizations met periodically, updated each other on their work, and decided whether to approach specific Congresspersons individually or jointly. But there was no central authority or blueprint dictating the process. Rather than following a formally laid out plan, members organizations acted according to their best hunches based on shared information and then refined and adapted their activities based on shared results.

Continual, informal evaluation

Except for the Better Safer World campaign, none of these campaigns undertook a formal, summative evaluation of their work. In fact, given the loose and shifting nature of the group's advocacy objectives, it would have been difficult for these coalitions to design and implement traditional evaluation studies that measure success against set outcomes.

Informally, however, there was almost constant assessment of progress toward tactical targets such as achieving the support of certain constituencies or lawmakers, attracting a certain number of people to an event, generating a certain number of letters, etc. This feedback was shared among coalition members and helped the group as a whole plan their next tactics.

Smart Messages

Brilliant Repositioning

In *The Tipping Point*⁵, Malcolm Gladwell writes about the importance of "sticky" messages—i.e. messages that stay with people, are frequently discussed or passed on to others, and, eventually have an impact. The importance of innovative messaging is obvious in these campaigns, most of which made bold leaps forward by brilliantly repositioning their issues.

For example, religious and quasi-religious groups that took on the AIDS issue worked hard to re-position AIDS as a disease that affects entire communities and claims many innocent victims. This was a major perceptual shift, even for their own constituents, who tended to see AIDS as a disease that affects a small number of morally lax people. By changing people's perceptions about the scope of AIDS and its victims, these groups made global AIDS more real to Americans and introduced the need for treatment and palliative care into a conversation that had largely focused on preventing the spread of AIDS.

The global AIDS movement also crossed an important threshold when activists stopped lobbying for individual AIDS programs and put their combined weight around a platform that

⁵ Gladwell, M. (2000). *The Tipping Point: How little things can make a big difference*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.



called for a comprehensive effort and need-based funding to combat global AIDS. Their main message was that AIDS is not just one of many health issues that threaten the developing world; rather it is de-stabilizing entire communities, and its potential fallout commands an emergency response on war footing.

The other cases also illustrate the advantages of positioning an issue in a novel and inspiring way. For debt-relief advocates, shifting the debate from economic terms to moral terms and linking debt-relief to the biblical concept of Jubilee was the key to extending their constituency beyond progressives and policy experts. The Framework Convention expands the scope of tobacco as a health issue by linking it to progress, development, national pride, environmental protection and good governance. Similarly, the Better Safer World campaign played a role in shifting Americans' attitudes by positioning international development aid as an essential investment in our own security and prosperity, rather than a charitable contribution. And the engagement of the nonprofit sector in the MCA helped expand the discussion of aid effectiveness to include indicators such as poverty reduction and civic participation.

In many cases, these new messages represented a perceptual shift for advocates as well as legislators. The various groups lobbying on these issues were able to get past their own agendas and agree upon a broad, common vision and message theme that captured the imagination of a critical mass of constituents and policymakers. As noted before, this ability to identify a grander vision may be one of the less obvious benefits of collaboration among diverse organizations—through discussion and debate of many different points of view, these groups were able to create messages that transcended their own spheres of interest and had more credibility and vision. In each case, these coalitions were seen to be using their expertise and influence for the greater good, not to promote their "pet" interests and agendas.

Multi-level messaging

Most of these campaigns also used a powerful combination of moral messages and pragmatic, research-based arguments. Advocates framed their vision and perspective in strong moral terms; but they also anticipated their audiences' objections and arguments and were prepared to counter them with hard facts and solid information. As one interview respondent noted, an important reason why NGOs were successful in influencing the creation of MCA is that they brought new information and expert analysis that policymakers needed to help them understand and operationalize this new concept.

The clearest example of how strong values were bolstered with hard data is the Jubilee advocacy effort. Debt-relief advocates anticipated that policymakers and their conservatively inclined constituents would question debt-relief on two grounds—(1) the ethical belief that people should take responsibility for their debts, and (2) the pragmatic concern that debt relief will only support corrupt governments. They were able to defuse these arguments by using data to show that these debts are not the moral responsibility of the people of poor nations and that the bill has sufficient safeguards to ensure that debt-relief monies are spent for the public good.

As another example, the case for AGOA III was grounded in moral arguments about living up to American values and supporting Africans as they try and help themselves, but it was supported by hard data to show that AGOA has indeed promoted industry and created jobs in African countries.



Audience-focused messages

In the four legislative campaigns we studied, messages and arguments were based on rigorous policy research, but available facts were interpreted based on advocates' knowledge of the current mood and concerns of policymakers. The "ask" and the rationale for it were tailored to the political climate at the White House and the Hill.

Indeed, these legislative advocacy campaigns did no formal audience research and chose not to develop consistent messages that would have universal application. Instead, messages for different audiences (and even different individuals) were tailored based on their concerns and interests.

The Better Safer World campaign was developed with the assistance of an advertising agency and used standard audience research techniques to inform message development. The campaign was guided by a pre-campaign poll and formative focus groups with the target audience (viz., likely voters in Des Moines, IA). Based on this information, the advertising agency developed message concepts that would likely appeal to the target audiences. However, these messages were seen by some of the member NGOs as being inconsistent with their values and disrespectful towards the people of developing nations. The matter was resolved after some debate between the NGOs and the advertising experts, but it raises an important point about balancing expert advice with the client's perspective. One of the most valuable roles of an outside expert is to help NGOs understand how their audiences see things and what they want to hear. But this outside perspective must be balanced with what the organization wants to say and must match its identity, style and tone.

Working from Within

Although all movements have roles for both outsider organizations (that challenge lawmakers and agitate against the status quo) and insider organizations (that advise and inform lawmakers), many of the people we interviewed noted the value of having access to decision-makers, or at least having an ally in the decision-making circles. This lesson seems to be particularly important for left-leaning organizations that moved toward outsider roles when a more conservative legislature and administration came to power. Encouraged by some of their advocacy successes, many left-leaning advocates have adopted a more pragmatic and open-minded approach. They now feel that they can be effective in the current political climate, although they might need to develop some new tools and relationships.

NGOs have also realized that having access to one or two key insiders can be an effective way to influence decisions. The best example of this focused influence is the creation of PEPFAR. By some accounts, President Bush's meetings with certain individuals—Jesse Helms, Bono, Bill Frist and leaders of evangelical Christian churches—were pivotal in securing his commitment to the issue. At one meeting with Senator Frist, President Bush is reported as saying — "I want you to show me how this money can be usefully spent and not just going down a rat hole, and I'm willing to put real money on the table".⁶ It

I have learnt that playing in the big tent is more important than winning every battle. The Right isn't all bad, and I don't take things as fact just because they come from our side. I'm more of a pragmatist now.
— Interview Respondent

⁶ Washington Post, January 30th, 2003. *Unlikely Allies Influenced Bush to Shift Course on AIDS Relief.*



helped also that key Administration officials such as Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice and Paul O'Neil were personally committed to addressing this public health challenge.

A less obvious example may be the creation of the MCA account. According to one of our interview respondents, the idea of a pilot program to assess how best to administer aid was suggested by Bono during a private interview with President Bush.

Working *with* the Political System

Each of the four legislative campaigns we studied was heavily influenced by individuals who understood the inner workings of Congress and Administration and knew how to "play the lobbying game." They understood the political realities that policymakers faced and worked within those parameters to secure their support. When possible they used political forces and processes to their advantage. This section highlights some of the strategies they used to maneuver their agenda through political wrangling and turf battles among policymakers, while building relationships that would help them in future advocacy efforts.

Moving Congress and Administration Simultaneously

Our interviews indicate that Congress and the administration are often involved in a subtle and complex power play on policy matters. Congressional priorities and support are essential for creating the political space for the President to take on a policy initiative; conversely Presidential leadership and active support are essential for getting any new legislation pushed through Congress. Successful passage and implementation of any bill may require advocates to work Congress and the Administration simultaneously, sometimes serving as a liaison between them, managing the relationship and making sure that credit is apportioned to satisfy both parties.

The contrast between PEPFAR and MCA illustrates this "checks and balances" relationship between the legislature and the executive. Neither one of these dramatic initiatives could have come about without the President's leadership. But because PEPFAR addressed a concern that Congress had already taken up in earnest, the legislation passed quickly and the fund was created within a few months of the President's announcement. MCA, however, was entirely a White House initiative, and few legislators felt personally invested in the issue. Legislation to fund the Account was not passed until almost two years after the President announced the initiative.

Helping legislators lead

Our research suggests that NGOs should carefully evaluate the political aspects of their policy recommendations and target lawmakers accordingly. In addition to other concerns, lawmakers' stand on issues is also driven by their assessment of how the issue will play out politically and how credit (or blame) will be assigned.

While legislators follow their party leadership on most issues, there is little glory in toeing the line. Taking the lead on an issue offers real political gains, but this payoff comes with risk attached to it. The trick is to be ahead of the curve, but not so far ahead that others won't follow. One of the challenges for advocates is to convince legislators that the issue is significant enough to provide an opportunity to display leadership, yet has enough support (among policymakers or key constituencies) that the political risk of championing it is



minimal.⁷ Like everyone else, lawmakers too are looking for low-risk, high-return investments on their political capital.

Two of our case studies illustrate this point. One of the problems with passage of AGOA III was its lack of novelty and consequent lack of sufficient potential political gains. The bill was a good one and had few detractors, but could have been lost in legislative proceedings if influential majority and minority leaders had not picked up its cause. Conversely, the problem with the Framework Convention bill is the enormous political risk it carries. Although the treaty commits the US to little more than it currently does to limit tobacco use, the potential backlash for supporting an international treaty that inhibits domestic trade makes it risky for legislators to take the lead on this issue.

Crafting "sellable" policies

One way for advocates to reduce the risk associated with their policies is to craft balanced policies that are likely to garner bipartisan support and will not become lightning rods for criticism by any influential constituency. Our interviews revealed that more and more NGOs are taking a more pragmatic and incremental approach to policy-making. They are trying to draft and promote legislation that *can* pass in Congress—legislation that balances different perspectives and concerns and includes elements that appeal to both sides of the aisle.

Organizational Focus

All the campaigns we studied were among their organizations' top priorities and program officers and organizational leadership were committed to them. Although staff may not have been exclusively dedicated to these campaigns, lead staff persons on the issue were personally committed to these issues and knew that they were a priority for their organizations.

Advocacy is like a can of paint. You can either paint one complete room in your house or you can use the can to paint a part of every wall.
— Interview Respondent

Our research also suggests that organizations should use their advocacy resources and clout strategically. Following the paint can analogy presented by one respondent (see box), how many rooms an organization can paint depends upon the size of its paint can, but NGOs should be careful to paint whole rooms rather than parts of walls.

At the inter-organizational level, coordinating advocacy priorities appears to have served NGOs well in pushing through bolder initiatives. As some respondents admitted to us, one reason that the Jubilee and MCA campaigns were successful was that a large number of NGO advocates focused on those issues, *at the same time*. Similar levels of effort by the same NGOs in different years would not have yielded the success of the coordinated effort.

Creating a sense of urgency

⁷ Research by Stephen Kull at the University of Maryland's Program on International Policy Attitudes (www.pipa.org) demonstrates that Members of Congress do not have an accurate perception of the public's attitudes on foreign policy issues. Kull argues that many Members are afraid to endorse progressive foreign policies because they mistakenly believe that their constituents are opposed to such policies. Demonstrating constituent support for these policies might therefore give legislators more confidence to champion them.



Using external milestones to create a sense of urgency around the issue can also contribute to campaign success. The end-date of 2000 gave a special impetus and urgency to the Jubilee debt-relief movement, galvanizing activists, organizations and legislators to focus on this effort for a finite period of time. Similarly, the focused support for AGOA III was motivated by the realization that many of the economic gains made in African nations would be undone if AGOA III were not passed before the end of the Congressional session. One of the factors that led to the creation of PEPFAR was that a variety of political pressures converged on the administration at the same time that President Bush was planning his first trip to Africa⁸ and needed to show the compassionate face of his foreign policy.

Timing advocacy efforts around international moments is key. This year, for example, we're looking at the G8 conference in June, the UN Millennial Summit in Fall, and the Doha Round in December.
— Interview Respondent

Many believe that the MCA, too, was created because President Bush needed to make a splash at the Monterey World Summit. After the announcement, advocacy by NGOs was particularly successful because they were able to unite and mobilize rapidly. Furnishing Congress with information and guidance at the time it was trying to understand and address helped to transform the NGO sector into an inside player on this issue. As one interview respondent noted: "We got to Congress before the administration did."

Tactical Issues

Advocates and funders alike struggle with the question of how available funds should be divided among different advocacy tactics like advertising, media outreach, local organizing, grassroots campaigns, and direct "inside-the-beltway" lobbying. Our research indicates that NGOs can successfully use a wide range of appeals and tactics to promote an issue.

Ideology and realism

While most of these campaigns combined ideological and pragmatic arguments, their tone varied significantly, ranging from sharply exhortatory to unbiased and informational. The campaigns for AIDS and debt relief were based on moral arguments, although they did not ignore the pragmatic and scientific aspects of these issues. At the other end of the spectrum, the NGOs who worked on fashioning the MCA did not try to make any ideological arguments for doing things one way or another—they argued that all their recommendations about how aid should be structured and delivered are empirically linked to better outcomes in developing nations.⁹

Our research also shows that successful advocacy has roles for both insider and outsider organizations, and often the best results are achieved through the combination of those influences. In the AIDS movement, for example, organizations like Health Gap and members of the Global AIDS Alliance took on the outsider role, organizing rallies, events and grassroots lobby days to promote the rights of people with AIDS. On the other hand, evangelical groups and coalitions like the Global Health Council had a less aggressive tone and worked with policymakers to draft politically acceptable solutions.

⁸ This trip was postponed. President Bush visited Africa for the first time in July 2003.

⁹ One example of this is the case made for inclusion of gender criteria for eligibility. Rather than argue for gender equity as a value, advocates illustrated that aid monies tend to be used more effectively in countries where women play a greater role in decisions.



Similarly, the two components of the Jubilee movement filled the insider and outsider roles nicely. The campaign's Public Policy Committee crafted a targeted and politically acceptable proposal, and quietly lobbied policymakers by appealing to their moral and religious values and exerting targeted grassroots pressure. The grassroots Jubilee movement continues to be a more outspoken critic of lender governments and calls for all poor nation debt to be forgiven as a matter of economic justice.

The Framework Convention is an interesting case study in this regard. While US-based anti-tobacco NGOs work as "insider" organizations with some government agencies (e.g. CDC and NIH) and friendly legislators, they assume a more aggressive, outsider role at international meetings. They have gone so far as to publicly shame the Bush administration and asked it to withdraw from treaty negotiations until it is serious about ratifying the treaty. One respondent, who is closely involved in this campaign, said that this hard-hitting stance probably did not increase the likelihood of the US ratifying the treaty, but it gave fresh impetus to negotiations and served to strengthen the language of the treaty.

Building grassroots movements

The Better Safer World campaign demonstrated that "middle America" can be persuaded to support international poverty reduction efforts. After three short months of campaigning, the campaign measured significant increases in people's awareness of international aid issues and professed support for poverty reduction policies. Campaign organizers credit much of this immediate gain in awareness and visibility to advertising, although they acknowledge that buying media with sufficient reach and frequency to replicate this result on a national level would be prohibitively expensive. Also, they caution that the campaign did not test how well this stated support would translate into actual grassroots advocacy or how long it would last. They concluded that local organizing takes more time and effort than buying media exposure, but it may be more sustainable and more effective for building devoted and active constituencies.

Surgical Advocacy

These case studies also suggest that, in some cases, strategic and targeted grassroots activism can be as effective as creating a "mass movement." In other words, advocates do not always have to get a lot of people engaged in an issue. Rather, they have to activate a critical mass of supporters to become engaged in activities like writing legislators, financing the work of lobbyists, and participating in lobbying days. Experienced lobbyists told us that letters by just 15 to 20 constituents are enough for a legislator to attend to an issue, opening the door for lobbyists to meet with staffers and present their agenda and ideas. These respondents also felt that Hill staffers are more convinced by advocates' arguments than their constituents' opinions, but grassroots pressure may be needed to get them to attend to an issue and/or provide the political cover needed for them to take a stand on it.

The passage of AGOA III is a good example of a surgical, strategic advocacy effort. The bill passed without much awareness, let alone vocal support, on the part of the US public. An influential and unified coalition of NGOs and business interest groups was sufficient to convince legislators of the importance of the bill. More often, however, "inside-the-beltway" lobbying efforts are more effective in combination with grassroots and/or media advocacy to raise the profile of an issue.

Celebrities

Celebrity involvement may also have contributed to the success of some of these campaigns. Celebrities can call attention to an issue; they can mobilize their fan base; and they sometimes have extraordinary access to policymakers. Some respondents observed



that a dedicated, informed and intelligent celebrity can do wonders for a cause, as Bono has done for AIDS, debt-relief, and other issues. However, most interview respondents cautioned against relying excessively on celebrities to promote policies. Some also felt that the contribution of celebrities tends to be over-estimated because their role is so visible; in reality, it is the dogged perseverance of grassroots organizers and policy advocates that keeps issues in front of policymakers and influences legislation.

Funding

We also questioned advocates about the value of having dedicated funds for specific advocacy campaigns. Most respondents said that their organizations had not received dedicated funding for pursuing these efforts; rather they had decided that these issues were organizational priorities and had allocated staff time to them. However, a few said that their engagement in specific issues had helped them build capacity in those areas. For example, one respondent said that getting involved in AIDS advocacy had allowed her organization to get funds to build their grassroots advocacy function from the ground up. Another said that her organization is now receiving new funds to monitor the work of the MCA more systematically than they were able to do in the past.

Expert advice

Finally, none of these interview respondents attributed the success of these campaigns to advice or guidance from outside consultants or research firms. Except for the Better Safer World campaign, all these campaigns were conducted by the staff of the participating organizations. Respondents acknowledged that different organizations' skills and experience varied, but noted that coalition members had pooled their expertise and learned from each other during these campaigns. One respondent added that the Framework Convention Alliance also consults with other coalitions such as the Campaign to Ban Land Mines and environmental groups to plan and coordinate effective tactics.



SECTION II: SIX SUCCESS STORIES

In this section, we tell the “stories” of these six campaigns, with special emphasis on what they have achieved and the main strategic breakthroughs that contributed to their success. These stories have been pieced together from campaign documents, media reports, and interviews with people who were closely engaged in these campaigns. In some cases, we heard different perspectives and interpretations of what happened, and have tried to reconcile them in our narrative.

Jubilee Debt Relief

Taking financial guidance from the Bible

The idea of debt relief had been debated in international aid and banking circles for many years, but it was not until the mid-1990s that lender institutions and governments began to seriously discuss policies and programs to grant debt relief to poor nations. At the time, debt relief was primarily considered within a political and economic framework. Bankers, policymakers and the media saw debt as a result of irresponsible governance, and most relief was directed toward promoting economic growth and/or making debt more sustainable and payable. Within this framework, which was the basis of the World Bank’s HIPC initiatives¹⁰, the conditions associated with debt relief often made it a difficult option for the nations that needed it most.

The Jubilee movement changed this perception in two significant ways. First, it took this dry, technical issue from banking books into the realm of morality and religion. It had a simple message—that debts that are perpetuated over generations and prevent people from pulling themselves out of poverty are morally reprehensible—and it drew upon no less an authority than the Bible to back this message. To counter the argument that debt relief will only line the pockets of corrupt officials, Jubilee advocates gave concrete examples to show that conditional debt relief can and has enabled poor countries to improve health, education and infrastructure for their people. This simple, moral, non-technical message reached and galvanized members of virtually all major Christian and Jewish groups in the US.

Second, the Jubilee movement shifted the focus of the discussion from the actions of corrupt and irresponsible past governments to the consequences borne by citizens, who had no part in taking on the debt and did not benefit from it. Drawing a distinction between past governments (who incurred debt) and poor citizens (who are suffering because of it) allowed the movement to sidestep the argument that people should pay off their debts even if it causes them hardship.¹¹

The Jubilee idea was born in the UK, where progressive and religious groups cast debt relief as a moral imperative and tied it to the end of the millennium. The bible (Book of Leviticus, Chapter 25) explicitly calls for all debts to be wiped clean every 50th year, also called the

¹⁰ The Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC 1) was passed by the World Bank in 1996. It proposed up to 80% debt relief by key creditor governments provided indebted nations fulfilled two three-year stages of structural adjustment conditions. In response to widespread criticism that HIPC 1 had been completely ineffective, HIPC 2 was launched at the Cologne summit of 1999. It promised “broader, faster and deeper debt relief, and an improved link with poverty reduction.”

¹¹ The global Jubilee movement took this one step farther to claim that debts made by western nations in the cold war years were irresponsible and politically motivated, and therefore people of these nations mustn’t be bound to them. However, this argument did not catch on in the US as strongly as it did in other countries.



Jubilee Year. To activists, the year 2000 was a “super-jubilee year” when the poorest nations should be redeemed from the massive debts that have enslaved them and crippled their development. The idea caught on quickly and Jubilee coalitions were formed around the world, in both creditor and indebted nations.

The Jubilee movement came to the US in 1996-97 when the Jubilee 2000/USA coalition was formed. The coalition was a loose mix of secular and religious, progressive and conservative groups. It soon split into two streams—(1) a secular, progressive people’s movement and (2) a more conservative and pragmatic policy advocacy campaign conducted by the Jubilee Campaign Public Policy Committee. The member organizations of the Public Policy Committee were part of the Jubilee USA coalition and contributed to its public outreach activities, but the Committee’s lobbying effort were separate from rest of the coalition.

The Jubilee Public Policy Committee was a tight group of 6-7 religious and quasi-religious organizations that implemented a carefully coordinated and highly strategic lobbying campaign around a relatively affordable legislative proposal to offer limited debt relief. This proposal was co-sponsored by four legislators across the political spectrum. This gave President Clinton the assurance that he had broad bipartisan support for this initiative. The White House then drafted a similar proposal that would cost the US a very affordable sum of \$435 million, mostly to reduce bilateral debt and debt owed to lending institutions other than the World Bank.

1997 was a year of bitter battles about the “ask.” 50 Years wanted the World Bank, IMF, etc. to wipe the slate clean and shut down. Some wanted to reform the debt structure. Others wanted to start with debt relief and work from there.

— Interview Respondent

The members of this Public Policy Committee used a combination of moral and pragmatic arguments to make their case to Congress and the Clinton administration. The moral argument was based on the Bible and bolstered by the fact that just about every Christian denomination and major Jewish group was participating in the Jubilee movement. In addition, the group provided arguments and data to show that the eligibility criteria and other terms of the bill would ensure that the money is used for development projects. Finally, through campaigns like Bread for the World’s Offering of Letters, they galvanized Christian groups to write their Senators and Representatives to work for debt relief.

The mainstream Jubilee USA campaign, in the meantime, focused on mobilizing the general public (through rallies, protests, letter campaigns, and Rock musician Bono’s *Heartland Tour*) to demand a complete and unconditional write-off of all “crushing” debt. They targeted religious groups but also had a more aggressive student mobilization component. This movement identified more closely with Southern and indebted nations and positioned debt relief as a matter of economic justice, rather than as a charitable act. It was largely independent from the global Jubilee movement but drew upon the global brand, which had the support of luminaries such as the Pope and Bishop Desmond Tutu.

On November 6, 2000, President Clinton signed into law the Jubilee Debt Relief Bill that provided \$435 million to reduce the debt of as many as 33 poor countries. The Jubilee movement regards this initial legislative success as a milestone in its ongoing battle. Today the movement boasts nearly 60 organizations, including religious groups and institutions, churches, labor, trade campaigners and AIDS activists, as its active members. It is focusing on multilateral lending institutions like the World Bank Group and other private banks that hold the bulk of poor countries’ debt. It is monitoring the implementation of the Jubilee Debt Relief bill, and the administration of the World Bank’s HIPC 2 initiative.



The debt relief provided so far (through the Jubilee bill as well as the World Bank's HIPC initiatives) is actually a very small proportion of the crushing debt owed by poor countries. However, thanks to this initial legislative success, debt relief has become part of the standard discussion on development and aid. In the late 80s and early 90s, NGO's efforts to promote debt relief were dismissed as naïve and idealistic. Today, the conversation focuses on what kinds of debt relief works best. Furthermore, the Jubilee movement made poverty reduction the main purpose of debt relief; debt relief is now valued as a way to help people, not just as a policy tool to foster economic growth or market development.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the Jubilee movement is that it forged strong alliances between progressive development aid groups and more centrist religious and quasi-religious groups like Bread for the World and World Vision. These relationships, and the increasing engagement of conservative and religious groups in international aid and development issues, have given the field of international aid advocacy a wider reach and a bipartisan flavor.

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) *A plan to combat an imminent humanitarian crisis*

During his January 2003 State of the Union address, President Bush surprised many AIDS activists by announcing a 5-year, \$15 billion initiative to combat AIDS in 14 African and Caribbean countries. The plan dwarfed, by far, all of the US's AIDS-related commitments up to that date. Its emphasis on providing treatment, as evidenced in the goal of putting 200,000 patients on antiretroviral drugs (ARVs), was also a complete reversal of the Administration's earlier position that AIDS treatments cannot be effectively administered in developing nations.

Although the announcement took AIDS activists by surprise, in retrospect the President's plan was the logical outcome of many influences. Global AIDS concerns had been gaining ground in Washington through the late 1990s, fueled by international reports and actions (such as the UNAIDS report on the magnitude of the crisis and the creation of the Global AIDS Fund); grassroots activism by groups such as Global Justice, Health GAP, and members of the Global AIDS Alliance; and inside-the-beltway lobbying by public health professionals and academic organizations (such as the Hill event sponsored by the Harvard AIDS Initiative).

The group of AIDS activists was large and heterogeneous, and their priorities and policy agendas were not well coordinated—in fact, they sometimes advocated for competing initiatives because of differences in their approach and philosophy. The bulk of these organizations were focused on AIDS prevention programs. A small number of AIDS organizations called for more resources for treatment, but treatment was largely neglected in global AIDS policies because of the belief that treatment cannot be effectively administered in developing nations and the (unspoken) perception that people with AIDS are responsible for their own condition.

The field changed dramatically about the year 2002, when grassroots activism and lobbying by quasi-religious poverty reduction groups and conservative evangelical churches added new impetus to the cause, transforming it from a progressive issue to a moral imperative. In February 2002, Reverend Franklin Graham of Samaritan's Purse convened the first

Groups like World Vision got engaged when their contributors started writing them because children they were sponsoring had died of AIDS.

— Interview Respondent



“international Christian conference on HIV/AIDS”, at which more than 800 evangelical Protestant and Catholic leaders and overseas missionaries demanded treatment for those who are dying of AIDS.

The engagement of religious groups played a critical role in helping people understand that AIDS is a humanitarian crisis that affects entire communities—not just a small number of people whose (immoral) behavior puts them at risk. It was not easy at first—some religious constituencies resisted their organizations’ engagement in this issue.¹² In time, however, grassroots efforts such as World Vision’s *Hope Worship Tours*, coupled with first-hand reports from missionary groups, drove home the nature and magnitude of the crisis and made AIDS a real and immediate concern. To emphasize the relative urgency of AIDS, Richard Stearns, the CEO of World Vision, likened it to an 80-foot tidal wave that threatened to destroy all the sand castles his organization was building through their community development projects. Providing treatment to people with AIDS and supporting communities that are ravaged by the disease thus came to be seen as a moral responsibility.

Many people who would not support AIDS programs in the US are for AIDS relief in Africa.
— Interview Respondent

Realizing that a piecemeal approach was not effectively stemming the scourge of AIDS, progressive AIDS groups also put their weight behind a comprehensive, need-based approach to fighting the disease. They presented systematic estimates of what it would take to deal with the global AIDS epidemic and called upon the US to contribute its share of the total (based on its proportionate share of the world economy). Seventy-seven AIDS advocacy organizations signed their support for a joint policy platform titled: *Saving Lives and Communities: A Proposal for US Presidential AIDS Initiative*, and called on the President to take leadership on this issue.

We framed the issue so that it became politically advantageous for President Bush to support it. We created buzz around the Presidential AIDS Initiative and had members of Congress call on the President to adopt it. We created an opportunity for the president to take leadership on an issue that will define a generation.
— Interview Respondent

The work of evangelical organizations and this new policy platform expressed the important perceptual shift that helped the public and legislators see AIDS as an emergency, not just another health concern. Activists began to emphasize the socio-economic and political consequences of AIDS, arguing that instability created by AIDS in Africa threatens entire countries and can threaten our own security and economy.

Direct and personal influences on the President also played a critical role in making PEPFAR a reality. (Then) Secretary of State Colin Powell is quoted as saying that AIDS is as serious as terrorism. Other members of President Bush’s staff, like (then) National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and (then) Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neil were also personally concerned about AIDS and wanted to address the global AIDS crisis. Republican Senators Frist and Helms personally petitioned the President to take action on this count, as did the Rock musician Bono.

¹² In 2001 World Vision commissioned a survey among evangelical Christians and loyal donors in the US. Only 7% of the respondents said they would be willing to donate to a respectable Christian organization to help children who had lost both parents to AIDS. This dismal response told World Vision that they had to first educate and mobilize their own constituent base before taking on significant advocacy or programmatic AIDS initiatives.



This confluence of forces made it politically advantageous for the President to make a big splash with his AIDS plan, while taking away all the risk associated with a bold move. PEPFAR allowed the President to outshine progressives on their own turf without alienating his conservative base. It also gave him the political and financial freedom to propose a plan that would rival the United Nation's Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, thus easing the pressure to contribute to that fund. Finally, PEPFAR's goal of making antiretroviral drugs available to African nations mitigated some of the international criticism of the US pharmaceutical sector.

Since the idea of a bold AIDS program already had bipartisan support in Congress, PEPFAR was authorized by Congress in May 2003, just a few months after the President's announcement. Congress put its own mark on the legislation by authorizing a \$1 billion contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, higher than what the Administration favored. Advocates are now focused on ensuring that enough money is appropriated for PEPFAR and the Global Fund every year, and that it is spent well. Political and moral issues still dog the debate on how AIDS should be addressed, but global AIDS is, for now, firmly positioned as an unstoppable and dominant political force, a humanitarian concern that no one can deny without serious political consequences.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act of 2004 (AGOA III) ***Exporting American values***

On May 18 2000, President Bill Clinton signed the first African Growth and Opportunity Act, AGOA I, which aimed to encourage investment and trade in selected African countries by granting them preferential access to the US market. In December 2002, President Bush enacted certain amendments (AGOA II) that further expanded the scope of the legislation. Additional technical amendments were also proposed and passed in the House of Representatives but died before the Senate when Congress adjourned that year.

AGOA has had a positive effect on industry and investment in some African nations, with the largest gains in the textile sector. US imports of African textiles more than doubled in the first two years of AGOA, and the bill is credited with creating hundreds of thousands of jobs. So, when certain provisions of the bill were scheduled to expire, an influential coalition of businesses and NGOs joined with the African Diplomatic Corps and key Congressional supporters to lobby for AGOA III, a bill to maintain and enhance the key provisions of AGOA I.

The bill already enjoyed bi-partisan support in Congress, with some high-profile supporters like Senator Grassley (Chair of the Senate Finance Committee), Senator Lugar (Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee), Representative Ed Royce (Chair of the House Foreign Relations Committee), Ranking Member Representative Charles Rangel, Representative Jim McDermott (House Ways and Means Committee), former Vice Presidential Candidate Jack Kemp and the Congressional Black Caucus. Likewise, the advocacy coalition for the bill—the AGOA III Action Committee—spanned a wide variety of organizations from corporations and trade associations to religious and anti-poverty NGOs. The African Diplomatic Corps also actively lobbied for the bill and made sure that it was mentioned by senior government officials and diplomats in all interactions with US policymakers, media, NGOs and other elites. While AGOA I had been received with some skepticism by progressive groups (who worried that the bill pushed trade incentives as a substitute for aid to African nations), the implementation of the policy had de-fused their concerns and shown that AGOA does indeed work to help African economies.



Despite the range of supporters, AGOA III's passage was far from assured. The bill was caught in political wrangling in an election year. With outsourcing emerging as an important election issue, many legislators did not want to be associated with a bill that could be construed as helping foreign industry at the expense of domestic workers. The Administration supported the bill but did not make it a high priority; and Congressional Democrats did not want to give the President an easy victory. There were also procedural issues—due to time constraints the Senate leadership had deemed that this bill could only be passed by unanimous consent without debate on any amendments or changes.

Realizing that any of these procedural or political issues could scuttle the bill and jeopardize many industries and jobs in Africa, the AGOA III Action Committee launched a concerted lobbying effort to ensure that the bill would pass that year. The group's efforts were coordinated by the Whitaker Group, whose principal, Rosa Whitaker, was Assistant US Trade Representative for Africa under the Clinton administration and was instrumental in the development of AGOA I. The Committee drafted politically "passable" legislation and worked with staffers of appropriate committees to promote the bill. To raise awareness of the issue, they hosted glamorous events on the Hill (funded by the corporate members and attended by high profile supporters like Rock musician Bono), placed ads in *Roll Call* and provided expert testimony in Congressional hearings. But they also crafted and presented highly tailored messages to win the support of individual Senators and Representatives. They worked closely with the African Diplomatic Corps whose active support was a critical factor in the bill's passage.

We worked closely with a list of [Hill] staffers. If you support them and lobby for their work, they will work with you. They want to win too.

— Interview Respondent

They were successful. On June 24, 2004, the Senate approved by unanimous consent and without change, the exact text of the AGOA III bill passed by the House a few weeks earlier. The key elements of AGOA were extended to 2015, providing the long-term assurance and certainty needed to support business investment and industrial growth in participating African countries.

The history of AGOA demonstrates a shift in policymakers' thinking on the relationship between trade and development aid. AGOA I was initiated by Congressman Jim McDermott who realized that trade and investment opportunities could help African countries climb out of poverty. The idea of negotiating "equitable" trade policies for Africa was embedded into legislation concerning the Uruguay Round Agreement in 1994, and gradually gained momentum as other Congresspersons like Charles Rangel and Phil Crane took up the cause. Spurred by bipartisan Congressional support for this initiative, by his own and his team's inclination to do something significant for Africa, and his upcoming visit to Africa, President Clinton gave the bill his support.

The bill was initially written with a "trade not aid" philosophy, and was expected to pass easily since it would appeal to conservative legislators. However, by pitching trade concessions as an alternative to development aid, it attracted the opposition of many progressive lawmakers and NGOs. A variety of NGOs and business interests worked to influence the bill, over a long and bitter legislative battle. In a highly unusual move, the African Diplomatic Corps also got involved in shaping and promoting the bill. The bill also got wider exposure via the National Summit on Africa, a broad program of multi-level and multi-sectoral meetings and policy papers designed to develop a grassroots policy initiative for Africa. By the time the bill was passed, progressive and faith-based organizations had



successfully shifted its language and spirit to reflect a “trade and aid” policy position, i.e. the idea that favorable trade terms and development aid complement each other.

Four years later, when AGOA III was introduced in Congress, trade and aid were no longer seen as competing or antagonistic interests. NGOs united to position AGOA as a trade bill that allows Africans to lift themselves out of poverty. In doing so, its supporters argued, AGOA embodies and illustrates American values of individual initiative and capitalist enterprise. They pointed out that if the bill’s provisions were not extended, America would be seen as reneging on the commitments and promises it had made and the values it had promoted to African nations.

This presentation of AGOA as a way for America to fulfill its promises and live by its values was important for preventing the bill from getting bogged in a discussion of the relative gains and losses for American business. Even though corporate interests were driving the bill (with the textile industry opposing it and retail, clothing manufacturers and energy sectors supporting it), the discussion of AGOA III focused on the real and potential gains for African nations, not American businesses.

The Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) ***Not just more aid, but better aid***

At the Monterey World Summit on Sustainable Development (March 2002), President Bush announced the creation of the Millennium Challenge Account, an independently administered account that would provide up to \$10 billion in additional development aid for poor countries that are committed to development. The announcement took most of the development aid community by complete surprise. Subsequently, the President called upon the NGO community to participate in shaping the MCA so it could be an effective tool for promoting economic growth in developing nations.

Two of the major NGO players in this field—InterAction and Bread for the World—convened a coalition to respond to the President’s challenge. This broad and diverse coalition comprised both religious and secular groups, with different skills and perspectives. Some of the member organizations focused on policy and research, some conducted programmatic initiatives in developing nations, and some were primarily advocacy groups. The coalition also reached out to the African Diplomatic Corps and business interests.

Traditionally, the NGOs in the InterAction coalition were engaged in advocating for more development aid or fighting to get aid dollars earmarked for their special issues and concerns. The creation of the MCA posed a fresh challenge for the NGO sector, forcing these organizations to think beyond how aid funds should be appropriated and allocated to what conditions and processes will promote effective use of aid funds.

Within the next few months, the NGO community organized into an effective machine to inform and educate Congress and articulate common priorities for how the MCA should be run. They generated data on how aid can be delivered effectively and presented this information to Congressional staffers and Administration personnel in an accessible way. They developed a comprehensive legislative agenda and actively promoted it on the Hill, trying to reach as many legislators and staffers as they could. They issued joint statements and conducted joint meetings on the Hill, taking care that no individual organization’s lobbying efforts would conflict with the voice of the Coalition. The group also united to ensure that creation of the MCA would not divert monies from other development accounts.



All member organizations timed their activities based on a common schedule that was matched to the progress of the MCA bill through Congress.

Despite their diverse interests, the group stayed cohesive because of the tremendous opportunity created by the account and a genuine desire to see it done right. The fact that the MCA gave complete ownership of these funds to developing nations also served to hold the group together by countering these organization's tendencies to channel money in accordance with their own priorities or interests. There were some tussles in the group when developing eligibility criteria for this fund, with different organizations advocating for criteria such as a good environmental record and women's rights. However, the coalition was able to reconcile these competing agendas by de-emphasizing ideological arguments and focusing on criteria that can be shown to be correlated with effective use of aid money.

The President had proposed the creation of the MCA without consulting Congressional leaders and securing their support. As a result, there was little interest in enacting and implementing this initiative. It was the NGO community that engaged and educated legislators about the possibilities and pitfalls of this concept. Congress welcomed NGOs in this role as expert informants that offered counsel to help them make good policy choices. While initially averse to any changes in the proposed structure of the Account, the Administration gradually came to realize that they needed the support of the NGO community to push the MCA through Congress. Thus the NGO community was able to build a good working relationship with both Congress and the Administration, sometimes serving as liaison and mediator between the two branches of government.

The MCA was approved and funded by Congress in early 2004, nearly two years after it was announced in Monterey. The final legislation showed the strong influence of the NGO community both in its substance and tone. Thanks to NGO efforts, the language of the bill explicitly emphasized poverty reduction as the goal, and called for more community participation in how these funds would be used by governments. The Board of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (the governing body of the MCA) was expanded to include representatives from USAID and civil society organizations. The working of the MCA is transparent to civil society and is carefully monitored by members of the NGO coalition. Also at the urging of NGOs, 10 percent of MCA funds were set aside to help nations who are close to making the MCA's eligibility criteria.

[When lobbying for inclusion of gender as a criterion for MCA eligibility] we tried to use "harder" arguments about efficiency and effectiveness and stayed away from the values or rights-based approach.
— Interview Respondent

The creation of the MCA and the engagement of the NGO sector have launched a fresh discussion of topics such as civic participation, governance, and criteria for assessing effectiveness of aid programs. It has also fostered greater respect for donor nations' ability to use aid monies to best meet their needs. The implementation of this account, however, has been delayed, partly due to delayed passage of the bill and partly because of the complexity of setting up a new and different aid mechanism. In April 2005, the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Republic of Madagascar signed a four-year, nearly \$110 million dollar Compact. NGOs are monitoring the working of the Account and are continuing to use their knowledge of aid delivery to advise the Administration on the process.



The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) *Tobacco is not just a health issue*

The idea of creating an international legal framework to combat tobacco use was presented at the 1994 World Conference on Tobacco and Health. However, it was not until Dr. Gro Brundtland became Director-General of the World Health Organization that work on the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the world's first legally binding public health treaty, started in earnest. Dr. Brundtland had the political experience and credibility to formulate and negotiate such a treaty. She also recognized that pressure from NGOs throughout the world would be crucial for making this treaty a reality and encouraged the participation of civil society organizations in this effort.

This was a new frontier for US-based tobacco activists, who were concentrating on addressing tobacco use in the US through social marketing and health education programs. In 1999, representatives of key western NGOs (Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, American Cancer Society, and Corporate Accountability International in the US, and UK-based Action on Smoking and Health) and prominent tobacco activists from Southern nations met in Geneva to initiate a global alliance of anti-tobacco NGOs. Their goal was three-fold—(1) to build global NGO capacity for anti-tobacco activism, (2) to negotiate strong language in the treaty, and (3) and to secure the ratification of the treaty.

These groups have been phenomenally successful in achieving the first of these goals. The Frame Convention Alliance is a vibrant network of more than 200 NGOs in 100 countries that are in continuous consultation and debate via a closed web link. Each member organization lobbies for the treaty and works on tobacco control in its own country, using strategies and tactics that are most effective in that situation. Although the Alliance is funded by the West, the group has a decisively democratic and egalitarian feel where all strategies and tactics, and even funding decisions, are fiercely debated.

The global power of this loosely bound group derives from its ability to come together as a highly organized and unified force, as it did during the six rounds of international treaty negotiations. During these meetings, advocates from around the world met daily to coordinate their messages, events, and press releases for maximum impact. They used a wide range of advocacy tactics to influence the delegates to these meetings, including: providing solid research-based educational materials; publishing a daily newsletter of conference proceedings; organizing lunch meetings and performances; and orchestrating sensational, attention-getting displays like unveiling a "tobacco death clock" and asking the American delegation to leave the Conference (because they were working to water down the terms of the treaty).¹³ During these meetings, the Alliance representatives spoke for all participating NGOs.

While working in Geneva, everybody spoke only on behalf of the Alliance, never as a representative of their individual organization. However, once home, you were free to "brag" about what you had been doing, free to interpret Geneva in light of your own situation.
— Interview Respondent

The main messages of the Framework Alliance take the emphasis off individual health and responsibility and draw attention to the social, political, environmental or economic damage caused by the tobacco industry. Positioning tobacco as a health issue raises the question of

¹³ Anti-tobacco activists consulted with other campaigns such as the Rights of the Child Campaign, the Campaign to Ban Land Mines and certain environmental groups to plan these tactics.



individual accountability (one can always choose not to smoke!) and it is difficult to get passionate about a deadly product that people choose to use. Shifting the debate from individual responsibility to corporate accountability has helped the issue gain traction in many countries. For example, enormous gains in tobacco regulation have been made in Thailand and South Africa where opposition to the tobacco industry was successfully linked with national development and pride. Anticipating that the primary objection to the treaty would come from the tobacco industry, the Framework Alliance specifically highlights how the tobacco industry manipulates corrupt governments, thus making it more difficult for governments to support the industry.

Within the US, the main opposition to the Framework Convention stems from Congress' general opposition to multilateral treaties. In addition, powerful industry lobbies—the tobacco industry, the hospitality industry, the advertising and marketing industry, and the Duty Free Retail industry—are also opposed to it. The Bush Administration also opposes the treaty, making it extremely difficult to even get the bill introduced in Congress. Activists are using grassroots techniques like letter-writing campaigns to persuade sympathetic Senators to take up the issue. They have publicly shamed the Bush administration at international events in an effort to get them to soften their stance. On the other hand, they have established good relationships with some government agencies (e.g. NIH, CDC and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms that are providing technical assistance and support for the Framework Convention.

Through their work on the Framework Convention, US-based tobacco activists have successfully expanded the scope of their work to include all aspects of the tobacco industry in all countries of the world. Tobacco is now seen as a global health concern that is closely associated with other ills such as political corruption and environmental degradation. They have also participated in the creation of a global movement that has strong local roots and presence. Even though the US has not yet ratified the treaty, the fact that the treaty has been ratified by 60 countries (20 more than the number required for activation) and has gone into effect is a significant achievement for American anti-tobacco activists. The commitment of leading progressive governments, the WHO Secretariat, innovative donors, the World Bank and other institutions was crucial in making the Framework Convention a reality, but the NGO sector certainly played a strong supportive role and shares the victory.

To do anything internationally, you have to be prepared to work well with others. We needed to learn to be respectful toward others and to listen as much as we talk.

— Interview Respondent

The Better Safer World Moving Public Opinion

The Better Safer World campaign originated in a series of meetings convened by the University of Washington's Mark Lindenberg Center for Humanitarian Action and Global Citizenship. These meetings were designed to be a forum for CEOs of the largest international aid and relief organizations to discuss common concerns. At their meeting in February 2002, these CEOs, like the rest of the country, were still recovering from the shock of the September 11th bombings and struggling with the question of how the US should engage with the rest of the world. They saw this turbulent time as a poignantly teachable moment in American history and an opportunity to make the case for better global citizenship.



After this meeting, the CEOs of nine major development and relief NGOs committed to working together to develop a response to this need.¹⁴ Each organization committed \$25,000 and staff time towards developing a campaign to encourage America to address its security concerns in a more thoughtful and constructive way. These organizations submitted a joint proposal to the Gates foundation and received additional funds for the project.

Each CEO appointed a representative to the Campaign Steering Committee, which also included the Campaign Director (a paid staff position) and the Campaign Coordinator (a consultant who had been instrumental in obtaining the initial funding for the CEO meetings and had guided the campaign since its inception). The Steering Committee met four times over the course of eight months to develop its mission, vision, structure and messages. It then hired an advertising agency to create campaign materials and develop a plan for disseminating campaign messages.

Several important strategic issues were discussed during these meetings. The first concerned what form the campaign should take, i.e. what it could hope to accomplish with its limited resources. After some debate, coalition members decided to devote their resources to conducting a multi-channel outreach campaign as a pilot program to test messages and outreach techniques. After some discussion about campaign audiences, the Steering Committee decided to target "middle America", rather than progressives or other sympathetic constituencies. It chose Des Moines as the site of the campaign, and decided to time the campaign to coincide with the Iowa caucuses.

Campaign messages and materials represented a balance between the coalition's progressive and conservative members. They were informed by the results of a quantitative poll and focus groups with target audiences. The final materials also reflected a compromise between messages that the advertising experts thought would be most effective (based on their audience research and experience) and those that reflected the values and culture of the member NGOs.

The campaign wanted to address people's concern for safety and security in a thoughtful way and link these concerns to global poverty issues. Its message was two-fold—(1) to create a safer world for ourselves, we must make the world better and safer for all people, and (2) individuals can make this happen. The first message seems almost a given in today's public dialogue, but it represents a breakthrough for a country that has, for most of its history, considered itself immune and apart from the rest of the world. It also challenged the dominant frame of fear and military might through which Americans were considering their security.

The second message was important because the enormity and complexity of global poverty often makes people feel helpless and apathetic and prevents them from taking any action. The campaign sought to empower people through a simple call to action—it asked people to sign the campaign pledge and commit themselves to making the world better and safer for everyone. The campaign also made a conscious effort to keep its policy recommendations simple. It consciously avoided a reference to the millennium development goals and simply advocated for an additional one percent of funds for global poverty reduction.

¹⁴ These nine organizations were: CARE, International Rescue Committee, International Medical Corps, Mercy Corps, Oxfam America, Plan US/Childreach, Save the Children, World Concern and World Vision.



Campaign messages were disseminated in Des Moines through paid advertising, media outreach, community events, alliances with community organizations, and mailings to constituents of participating NGOs. The campaign generally targeted likely voters, but made a concerted effort to reach specific sub-groups through venues such as colleges and churches. The paid media exposure through TV, radio and print advertisements was calculated to achieve sufficient reach and frequency to raise the overall awareness of the campaign in the community. The campaign team in Des Moines formed alliances with local organizations, including the local chapters of member organizations, and participated in local events to reach people.

In three short months, the campaign recorded significant increases in people's awareness of global poverty issues and support for policies to address these concerns. Large numbers of Iowans signed the campaign pledge, visited the campaign website, and attended events to demonstrate their support for the campaign. The credibility of the member NGOs played a big role in this success, as did high visibility of the campaign in the media and the enthusiastic efforts of some of the local organizers.

People trust NGOs but they trust groups of NGOs even more.
— Interview Respondent

The Better Safer World campaign demonstrated that people can be mobilized around international poverty reduction and that regular folks in "middle America" understand that a better world is a safer one for them. Due to its short time frame, the campaign could not ascertain how well this grassroots sentiment can be sustained without continuous media presence, or how effectively it can be translated into long-term commitment and active advocacy by supporters. However, the success of this pilot program has led to the development of the ONE campaign, a national effort to build a strong and active grassroots constituency to advocate for better US policies to address global health and poverty issues.



APPENDIX A: INTERVIEWEE LIST

Adam Taylor

Member of the Board, Sojourners
Formerly Executive Director of Global Justice

Asma Lateef

Senior International Policy Analyst, Bread for the World

Bernadette Paolo

Vice President, The Africa Society of the National Summit on Africa

Claire Dougherty

Manager, International Programs, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

David Beckmann

President, Bread for the World

David Ray

Director of Constituency Building, CARE USA

Served as the Chair of the Executive Committee of the Better Safer World Campaign

Derek Yach

Yale School of Public Health
Formerly Executive Director of the Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health cluster at the World Health Organization

Holly Burkhalter

US Policy Director, Physicians for Human rights

Imani Countess

Coordinator of Africa Program, American Friends Service Committee Peacebuilding Unit
Formerly Executive Director, Washington Office On Africa

Jim McDonald

VP Policy and Programs, Bread for the World

Judy Wilkenfeld

Director of International Programs Partnerships and Development, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids

Marie Clarke Brille

Director of Public Education and Mobilization, Africa Action
Formerly National Coordinator of the Jubilee USA Network

Nisha Desai

Director, Public Policy, InterAction

Nora O'Connell

Legislative Director, Women's Edge

Peter Blomquist

Mercy Corps
Formerly Campaign Coordinator for the Better Safer World Campaign

Princeton Lyman

Ralph Bunche Senior Fellow for Africa Policy Studies, Council on Foreign Relations

Ray Almeida

Senior International Policy Analyst, Bread for the World

Ritu Sharma

President, Women's Edge

Robert Zachritz

Senior Policy Advisor, World Vision

Sarah Lucas

Senior Associate, Outreach and Policy, Center for Global Development

Shehnaaz Rangwala

Assistant to the to VP Policy & Programs and Church Relations, Bread for the World

Tom Hart

Director of Government Relations, DATA
Formerly Director of Government Relations for the Episcopal Church



APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. To start, who was involved in these advocacy efforts?

LISTEN FOR/PROBE CAMPAIGN'S ORGANIZATION:

- Number and diversity of organizations involved? Religious right? Business groups? Other surprising allies?
- What brought the collaborating organizations together? What kept them together?
- (OPTIONAL) Were there any major political (turf) or ideological struggles? How were they resolved?
- How tightly organized and coordinated was this effort? Was there a formal coalition?
- What was the nature of the collaboration (if there was any)? At the strategic level or at the tactical level? Just information sharing?

2. What were these organizations up against?

LISTEN FOR /PROBE NATURE AND STRENGTH OF OPPOSITION:

- Was there an organized opposition or was it just about fighting Congressional inertia and get things done?

3. Who did you seek to target and how?

LISTEN FOR/PROBE COMPLETE RANGE OF TACTICS:

- Balance between media, lobbying and grassroots activism
- Use of celebrities or other key supporters
- Was the message/frame consistent across groups?
- Was a case made for why action is needed NOW?

4. I have a few additional questions I'd like your insights on...

[Ideally, they should answer this question for the coalition; else they should answer it for their organization's work]

- Was there a planning process?
- Was there an overall strategy?
- Were there clear policy objectives?
- Was there any division of labor/efforts among different organizations?
- What kind of measurements, if any, did organizers take along the way? Was there any kind of baseline survey to measure progress against? Did organizers use these measures to make any mid-course corrections?
- Did you engage any experts/consultants to help you in planning or executing the campaign? Did the individuals involved have special expertise in advocacy?

5. How would you rate the overall success of these efforts?

LISTEN FOR/PROBE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

- Did you achieve all your goals or not? Why/how?
- Other benefits of the campaign? - Raised awareness, created relationships or infrastructure that could be activated in the future, yielded some important lessons...



- In what ways were these efforts less than completely successful? What still remains to be done?

6. In about a 100 words or less can you tell me how important each of the following factors was in contributing to this effort's success?

- Funding
- Planning
- Assessment/adjustment along the way
- Effective collaboration
- Celebrities
- Specific events or occurrences (even outside of advocates' control)

7. What do you think are the main lessons of this campaign for future policy advocacy efforts?

PROBE:

- What would you do differently?
- What would you definitely carry forward to other work you do in the future?

