# Re | Claiming the narrative for social change:

## Mapping a philanthropic response

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# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report provides the results of a broad stroke mapping of initiatives supported by various European and American philanthropic bodies. These initiatives aim to leverage the power of strategic communications, and in particular, effective narratives, to counter the closing of civic space and to achieve positive social change. It is intended as a real-time snapshot of ideas and approaches to capture what is being done and where, identify gaps, and share learning on new pathways and solutions for narrative change. The mapping includes some initiatives that fall outside the philanthropic community but which have potential for further exploration and/or adoption.

The report is structured according to different typologies that constitute an element of strategic communications. Each typology highlights an initiative that: has potential; inspires new thinking; fulfills a need; or could be scaled up for impact. Gaps and learnings in each area are listed. Additional information is provided on a Foundation that is engaged on such work. Questions that could be considered for discussions at a convening in March are also proposed.

The overall mapping of initiatives is in Annex 1. They are grouped according to the structure of the report and are formatted to provide information on the name of the implementing agency/partners, the title of the project, the thematic and geographic area of operation, and where possible, the names of the donors supporting the initiative.

Research for this report involved semi-structured interviews with 15 programme managers, programme directors, communications managers and officers and strategic communications consultants from Foundations, Philanthropies, collaborative Funds and their grantees based in Belgium, UK and the USA. All are engaged on projects relating to narrative change, strategic communications and research aimed at changing public attitudes on issues ranging from immigration, human rights, gender equality, sexual reproduction and sexual orientation rights and the closing of civic space. A complete list of interviewees is provided in Annex 3.

The mapping also includes: desk research encompassing online research; website reviews of individual philanthropic entities, grantees and other organizations working on social change; email communications; insights from an international conference on constructive journalism; and a webinar by the Global Strategic Communications Council. Both published and non-published research and internal documents were similarly included. A literature review is provided in Annex 4.

This exercise is not intended to be comprehensive. The findings and recommendations in this report do not reflect the opinions of the Oak Foundation.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

*"A lot of campaigns are based on the belief that we will win because we are right. But that is not true and accepting that is not true is important in understanding this challenge in an operational way."*

Tom Brookes, CEO, Global Strategic Communications Council

Nationalism, populism and religious/cultural conservatism underpinned by anti-migrant, anti-gay, anti-feminist beliefs are not new nor recent. However, in the last few years, we have witnessed their dramatic and globally de-stabilizing growth in a relatively short space of time. This growth has accompanied a de-legitimization of democratic values and liberal norms based on human rights, equality and good governance.

Their success lies partly in the definition and use of insidious and agile narratives. Based on cultural and religious values, they resonate with and mobilize old and new audiences alike. When far-right women leaders claim to defend everyday women's rights from large-scale immigration of socially conservative men, they are adroitly co-opting progressive values into a core mobilizing strategy.

It lies also in the ability of such movements to skilfully misinform through **social and digital platforms,** to **transcend borders**, **suppor**t each other's networks, **share their messages** and **mobilize resources for common cause.** The rise of digital technology is indeed widely credited with the **ascendancy of conservative** groups and thinking,[1] backed up by self-owned or sympathetic traditional media.

Equally effective is their **long-game approach** to a **value-based cause** with **a clear vision and consensus on goal**. Whether it is in the outreach to youth to become the foot soldiers and leaders of the future,[2] or a resource strategy that puts a premium on narrative, these movements are operating in the tomorrow to propel their vision forward today.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) and activists are both on the frontline and on the backfoot in the face of this rising tide of social conservativism and populism. The shrinking space of a **fragmented civil society** is often campaigning on single-cause issues or competing for scarce resources. Strategies focus on changing laws and policies with scant investment in communications to establish an emotional connection with the public through values-based narratives.

While populist and conservative movements are **united** in a set of values, the **lack of such clarity and goal** is undermining efforts by the progressive movement to push back.

The progressive movement needs to knock-out narratives of its own. They should be based on a vision of a shared sense of humanity. The imperative is to both pin these down and innovate scaled action to propel them.

With governments either directly behind or leading from the front on populist efforts to dismantle democratic values, **the role of philanthropy** in supporting and strengthening civil society to fulfil its mandate has taken a **new urgency**. The impact of the digital revolution in galvanizing anti-progressive movements has put a spotlight on **leveraging the power of strategic communications** for positive social change.

For Oak Foundation and others, strategic communications are assuming greater importance in grant-making. However, with the scale and complexity of the task ahead, there is a **critical need to align and ramp up both resources and efforts for maximum impact.**

This mapping of a philanthropic response on strategic communications for narrative change is a real-time snapshot. It covers a wide range of actions being taken, from research to movement building. It aims to spotlight **opportunities** for **collective** strategic communications **solutions** that leverage the combined resourcing muscle of philanthropy to "hit where [opponents] are the strongest."[3]

The backers of anti-progressive movements **think big, invest deep, fund values** and don't lose sight of their ultimate goal when there are no immediate returns. **Fluid and often opportunistic, strategic communications** are their means to deliver their vision.

We must learn from that and **unite** in **thought, action and urgency** to reclaim the narrative for a positive, inspiring vision of the world we want.

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[1] *The Mobilization of Conservative Civil Society*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

[2] Examples include the use of young children and adults as « cyber scouts » in Thailand cited in the Carnegie report or the targeting of young schoolchildren in Eastern Europe through after-school activities in the GPP's report: *Religious Conservatism on the Global Stage: Threats and Challenges for LGBTI Rights.*

[1] Tom Brookes, CEO, Global Strategic Communications Council on the most effective way to counter an opponent's narrative.

# 2. REINFORCING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS FOR CHANGE

# 2.1 Research (public opinion research and evidence generation)

> *"There is a tremendous amount of research. We need to better understand what is missing, what should be done with it. It's not clear and it's overwhelming."*
>
> Interviewee

**Definition:**

Cognitive research the study of mental processes and how they relate to behaviour. In messaging, it is used to examine how reason and emotion can impact values and opinions.[1] Public opinion research measures the opinions of a population on an issue in described geographic areas. It does this through random sampling of that population and a range of methodologies to garner opinions.

**Example:**

**Four Freedoms Fund - The Immigration Research Consortium**
Thematic and geographic area: Immigration, USA

Set up by the Four Freedoms Fund, it is hosted by the Opportunity Agenda. The Research Consortium was established in response to the findings of '*What the Numbers Don't Tell Us'* report. These highlighted the need for greater collaboration within the sector to avoid the duplication of expensive research and analyses by providing access to research already carried out.

The Research Consortium has two main functions:

- a monthly call to highlight and coordinate on opinion research projects for immigration advocates, researchers and funders
- to serve as a **closed-source online** repository of US research that can be curated as a resource for the movement (the Library) and to pass on learning

One early observation after its creation was that Foundations were funding "the same researchers, who do not even talk to each other."

The FFF is working on developing metrics to assess if it is having its intended impact with findings of the evaluation due in 2020.

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[1] *Changing the Story – A Reflection on Communications Hubs Supported by Oak Foundation*, Coleman, N. 2018

*The Four Freedoms Fund is supported by 15 donors, including Oak Foundation, Open Society Foundations and Unbound Philanthropy.*

**Gaps:**
There is a need for:

- More localized research, particularly outside of the USA
- Research with a more nuanced understanding of target audiences, especially the anxious middle and its sub-segments
- Better understanding of how much of the population needs to be reached to bring change
- Replicating research learning from the USA/Europe to other parts of the world

**Learnings:**

- Involve grantees in design and implementation of research from the beginning to ensure buy-in and use of findings.
- Ensure communications staff are included in research processes from the start. It changes how they do their work after.
- The anxious middle of public opinion is malleable and attainable.
- Opinion and attitudinal research should include core supporter group thinking to ensure it is not forgotten or alienated in drive to reach anxious middle.
- Research should pinpoint the *priority concerns* of different target audiences.
- The best way to approach the anxious middle in long-door conversations was to begin with a question asking them to recount a time when they were shown compassion. Policy questions should be left to the end.
- The learning from testing with focus groups is exponential.
- Quick test messages on Facebook when there is no money for expensive research and use response to decide whether to go further or not.
- Wellspring Philanthropic Fund's evidence-based research on transgender equality shows it is possible to take learnings and findings from one location and successfully apply them in other regions.

**Discussion questions:**

1. Should the UK/Europe have an online research repository to capture and share all its many public opinion research on a broad range of issues?
2. How can we consolidate information across projects to better understand public opinion on a given issue?
3. Would a global online repository of research serve the purpose of replicating learning to other parts of the world? Is it feasible?

**Foundation spotlight:**

There are several foundations in the USA and UK invested in public opinion research. In the UK, the **Barrow Cadbury Trust** (BCT) is jointly funding several initiatives. This includes the **IMiX-IPSOS Mori Migration Tracker**. Four waves of polling over two years will track public attitudes with input from civil society organizations to ensure greater ownership of the findings. **The National Conversation on Immigration** organized by British Future and Hope Not Hate was the biggest public consultation on immigration in the country. Based on a Canadian model, it engaged nearly 20,000 people across the country and reached nearly 10,000 more through online surveys. The findings are being fed into policy through the Home Affairs Parliamentary Select Committee.

# 2.2 Narrative change

> *"Narrative change is much more than communicating out of a problem. It is about changing common sense, opinions and beliefs, going beyond the media and into popular culture.*
>
> *It requires a joined-up analysis, a long and sustained investment in multiple strategies and a broad set of competencies that include the ability to build constituencies and from there - movements."*
>
> Annmarie Benedict, The Social Change Initiative

**Definition:**

A narrative is a connected body of stories on an issue infused with values and a deeper, common meaning that is embedded in culture. Narrative change is the explicit adoption of a change strategy that sees narrative as a core element in changing beliefs and attitudes.[2]

**Example:**

**Just Labs – Reclaiming Civil Society Space: Game Changing Narratives for Human Rights** and the **Civil Society Narrative Hub**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic Space and Human Rights, Global**

This is a two-step solutions-focused programme using *product design methodology* to develop prototypes for narrative change in individual country contexts. The goal is to push back the closing of civic space and erosion of human rights through new and powerful narratives.

To generate fresh thinking, phase one brought together activists and people from outside the human rights sector, including marketing and behavioural science experts.

The project focused on three groups of countries: almost closed, dangerously closing, and open but with indicators of closure. Activists from 12 countries in different continents identified specific narrative challenges in national contexts. A series of agile and experimental testing and learning workshops identified core ingredients for effective narrative change strategies.

Narrative strategies based on *community, culture and cooperation* were pinpointed with 12 prototypes produced. These all found that "what one *does* is the message" and that the emphasis should be on *human* rather than on rights.

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[2] *Narrative Change and the Open Society Public Health Program,* Davidson. B, 2016

In phase two, the Civil Society Narrative Hub will test core narrative ingredients for effectiveness and replicability in other challenging national situations with huge know-how and investment gaps. Operating as a donor collaborative fund, the Hub will also identify variables in narrative change strategies and the issues best suited to carry specific narratives.

This approach builds new cross-sectoral partnerships and provides access to critical new skillsets for the movement. The testing of ingredients for narrative change in real world situations, particularly in the global South, points to a significant potential for greater replicability and upscaling.

*The Fund for Global Human Rights (FGHR) and the Open Society Foundations (OSF) funded the Game Changing Narratives Phase.*

*FGHR, OSF and a US-based private foundation are funding the Civil Society Narrative Hub, with more partner donors sought to allow scaling up.*

**Gaps:**
There is a need for:

- A positive values-based over-arching narrative that is successful in de-Othering.
- An understanding of how to frame debates around healthy families that serve as a strong counter-narrative.
- Narrative learning being applied to areas outside of USA/UK/EU.
- Spokespersons networks outside of USA/UK that go beyond media interviews.
- Evaluations or learning inputs from narrative projects for greater clarity on which messages and approaches are having impact.

**Learnings:**

- OSF's internal community of practice on narrative change has identified various challenges:

    - there is no clear definition of what narrative change means to everyone
    - further clarification is needed on the boundaries and overlaps between narrative change, strategic communications, storytelling, movement building, cultural strategies and public opinion
    - factoring in emotion in public decision-making and reconnecting with the public is essential for narrative change
    - more evaluation is necessary to better understand the link between narrative change and policy change

- Focus on values for narrative change and then choose the issue best suited for a value.

- Globally, family, friendships and safety are important for everyone.
- What works is talking about people, and language that evokes family and togetherness.
- Be positive and drive the debate to common sense solutions.
- Using labels on people such as refugees and migrants is counter-productive.
- Language does matter, but the right words alone will not fix things.
- Facts and evidence remain key elements in a narrative response toolkit.
- In the UK, the narrative on the Windrush story developed by IMiX and partners focused on the British sense of fairness rather than on race. Traction was lost in right-wing press when messaging focused on the "hostile environment."[3]
- The messenger is as important as the message. Credible, authentic and trusted spokespeople can make the difference in shifting attitudes.
- Equal marriage, Irish abortion and Time to Change mental health campaigns underline effectiveness of using family and friends of people concerned to tell the story, based on love, safety, empathy.
- Some of the migration work about the Other could be relevant for inter-related issues such as peacebuilding, race, polarization, populism etc.

**Discussion questions:**

1. How can we ensure a long-term funding structure for narrative change work?
2. Can the Demos Race-Class approach be replicated outside of the USA?
3. Would a closed source online portal to host the best tried and tested narratives for sharing and use serve purpose? If so, should it be at national, regional or global level?
4. Would an OnRoad's spokespersons model be replicable and feasible elsewhere?
5. Would a narratives coordinator or small active group of people among donors avoid programme duplication and enhance learning?

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[3] The Windrush Generation' is named after the ship 'Empire Windrush' which in 1948 brought black Caribbean migrant workers invited to assist UK's post-war economic reconstruction. In 2018 news that many of this generation had been recently deported for not having documented status ignited public controversy, amid allegations it was part of a broader deterrent 'hostile environment' policy.

**Foundation spotlight:**

As part of **OSF'**s widespread narrative change initiatives, the **Eurasia Program** will run a test lab with Fine Acts Lab in Bulgaria in 2019. It will bring artists and technologists together to work for three days on a specific issue. Mentored by organizations working on that issue, they will create prototype products. The winning product, chosen by PR agencies, marketing companies and other private sector individuals, will be produced by the organizations as open-source. The initiative has the added benefit of building relationships between unusual allies and identifies social champions among the private sector.

# 2.3 Dissemination

## 2.3.1 Storytelling and media engagement

> *"People are spending a lot of money on research and messaging, thinking the job is done. But the purpose and goal have not been identified."*
>
> Interviewee

**Definition:** The telling and sharing of stories that connect people in time and event by oral, visual or written means, creating a shared history and narrative in the process. In this context, storytelling infrastructures – communications hubs – are defined as a 'structure to provide communications messaging, guidance, capacity or coordination on an issue, in a way that is designed to support multiple organizations.'[4]

**Example:**

**IMiX (Integration and Migration Exchange) – Strategic Communications and Narrative Change**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration, UK**

Set up as a communications agency for the migration and refugee sector by a group of donors but seeing itself as a collaborative communications hub. IMiX facilitates better communications on migration in the UK by building responses to developments on the issue. It engages targeted media and provides strategic communications support for the sector. The latter includes day-to-day practical help and strategic input on digital engagement, campaigns and messaging developed from research and polling.

Recognizing this is not enough to bring the needed change, it is now focusing on building sustainable communications capacity among like-minded partner organizations. The goal is to reframe the migration debate to create a more positive vision on welcoming migrants and refugees into society.

On communications, this is planned through narrative and counter-narrative content production developed through research and data collaboration. It is also working to build alliances between community organizations across the UK.

IMiX acts as the intersection between community organizations and parliamentary influence while still assisting organizations to navigate parliamentary processes through direct interaction with MPs.

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[4] *Changing the Story – A Reflection on Communications Hubs Supported by Oak Foundation*, Coleman, N. 2018

It is creating alliances elsewhere by working with migrant-dependent business through a Business Strategic Migration Forum. It similarly works with the Runnymede Trust (a leading race equality think tank) to tackle the race element of immigration.

IMiX is now localizing to better reach target audiences and to more effectively support organizations in the regions. A regional coordinator is being recruited for the West Midlands as a first step with funding from Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Its main challenge is a lack of capacity.

*Funded by, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Oak Foundation Unbound Philanthropy, New Philanthropy Capital, and others*

## Gaps
There is a need for:

- Communications hubs & greater capacity outside of USA/UK.
- Distribution of messages on LGBTQI, abortion and other issues outside of USA/Europe.
- A rapid response communications hub or ability to provide communications support to CSOs during crises or to counter reporting of events (eg. World Congress of Families) anywhere in world.
- More resourcing for communications hubs infrastructure, communication and campaign strategies, content production and dissemination.
- Greater communications capacity within CSOs to communicate strategically across all platforms.

## Learnings:

- The frequency of media reporting and storytelling on an issue is as important as content and tone in shaping lasting public opinions.[5]
- Make values relatable by talking about families and real people, and don't peddle fear.
- No matter how well a message is crafted, it is not as effective as visuals. Imagery matters – show people can be part of the change they want.
- Support grantees who use communications as a primary strategy, including communications hubs, and resource on equal pegging to policy and programming.
- Communications hubs have contributed to a more informed debate on migration and helped raise communications literacy within CSOs.
- Hubs should have localized presence and support to CSOs in regions.

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[5] *Change the narrative, change the mindset – a new way of reporting on the migration/refugee crisis?* Pandya, J., 2017

- Key element of success in Time to Change mental health campaign in UK was the time spent on researching target audiences, developing a dissemination strategy and timeframe with metrics for evaluation.

**Discussion questions:**

1. Can we create a global multi-donor strategic communications fund encompassing all communications processes?
2. What would be the best 'infrastructure' for responding rapidly to crises and events?

**Foundation spotlight:**

**Oak Foundation** supported seven communications hubs working in the human rights and immigration sectors since 2011 in the USA, UK and Belgium/EU. These included: British Future, IMiX, Equally Ours, EPIM, Opportunity Agenda and ReThink Media. They each used different approaches and served different purposes. This support represented 33% of the Programme's communications grant-making. It reflected the belief that to change negative public opinion and policy a range of communications tools and approaches were required, and that hubs could offer economies of scale in providing communications support to multiple organizations across a sector.

## 2.3.2 Campaigning and advocacy

> *"We need to find new players, not those always sitting in the room with you."*
>
> Interviewee

**Definition:**

Working to achieve a specific goal in an "organized and active" way to inform, influence or change thinking at public, political and institutional levels, in order to effect behavioural and policy change on an issue.

**Example:**

**Social Change Initiative – Migration Narrative Programme**
Thematic and geographic focus : Immigration/Refugees, Europe

In France, where there are few coalitions, **the Social Change Initiative (SCI)** is funding MiC's small, agile and deeply connected team to target specific groups. The staff, who have connections to the Catholic Church, government, NGOs etc. can '*move ideas fast and effectively'.*

Pilot programmes have targeted the Church and local Mayors in areas of mixed populations. Research for the Church on Catholic opinions has been used to produce messaging for a Bishops Conference, with Bishops acknowledging the need to activate the Catholic base and follow the Pope's call to welcome migrants. Notes for sermons were explored to see how to reach anti-migrant people.  MiC is also working with influential Jesuit and influential Catholic NGOs such as CARITAS on using the research outcomes.

The success of MiC France is partly due to its staff who believe in this approach, and a *strategy suited for a specific location, context and time.* The organization is overcoming the liability of being a brand new entity in a tradition-focused country by employing staff with the necessary connections and roots.

*SCI funding for MiC France is through Atlantic Philanthropies until 2019.*
*MiC is also funded by the following foundations: Oak, OSF, Omydiar, Unbound, Paul Hamlyn, Ford and the Emerson Collective as well as local funds.*

**Gaps**
There is a need for:

- An early warning system of far-right activities and messages.
- Identification of approaches that succeed in more effective collaboration and alignment of CSOs campaigning and advocating on similar or same issues.
- Strategic communications capacity on campaigns and advocacy work among CSOs.
- Creative and agile initiatives that bring together unusual partners at the level and scale required.

**Learnings**

- Importance of recruiting the right people with the right skills, experience and connections for advocacy work.
- CSO communications need to be integrated rather than sitting apart from programmes and policy.
- Although MiC France structure and approach is the right fit for the French context, it would not necessarily work elsewhere. Different countries require different approaches/structures.

**Discussion questions:**

- What kind of structure and process would be most effective in facilitating collaboration on campaigns?
- Would sharing of learning and exchange of information between advocacy organizations be more useful in aligning CSOs work than collaboration?

**Foundation spotlight:**

The **European Programme for Integration and Migration's** (EPIM) Sub-Fund on **Communicating on Migration in a Changing Environment**, provides behind-the-scenes strategic communications support to several EU-wide CSOs campaigning and advocating on migration and refugee policy change. EPIM focuses on strengthening communications capacity through organizational development, coordination and exchange, convenings and small-scale training. This includes support for the Migration Policy Group which has created a campaign coordination team to enable European CSOs both in Brussels and in EU Member States to carry out joint campaigns. EPIM also supports EPAM's CSO coordination group in Brussels – a loose network of NGO communications staff engaged in advocacy – to meet regularly and coordinate on communications work for greater impact.

**EPIM's 14 partner foundations contribute collectively to communications work with OSF, Barrow Cadbury Trust, Adessium, Oak Foundation and Porticus playing a lead role.**

### 2.3.3 Digital media and technology

*"[Activists] who use social media 'broadcast' when it should be about engagement and action…..there are people out there who are interested in human rights and migrants but we are not giving that traction by responding to their questions."*

Interviewee

**Definition:**

Digitized content that is published and shared over the internet, social media platforms, computer networks and smartphones in text, audio, video, graphic or animated formats. Digital media can be static, dynamic and interactive and operate on different timescales.

**Example:**

**YouTube -** **Creators of Change**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Social change**, **Global**

A YouTube initiative that spotlights, mentors and promotes inspirational 'Creators' who use the social media platform to stimulate productive conversations on difficult issues and make a positive impact on the world.

Those chosen to be Ambassadors and Fellows are helped to make video 'impact projects' on any issue but with the aim of bringing people together and increasing tolerance and understanding. It has seven national local chapters and an Asia-Pacific regional one. In Indonesia, for example, the project has teamed up with a local NGO to train students on creating change through video in a campaign #1nDonesia. In Germany, YouTube creators have joined forces under the banner #NichtEgal (It Matters) to form a movement to counter online hate, while in France a partnership with film directors and NGOs is fighting hate speech.

To engage more Creators, the initiative provides tools and resources for YouTube creators to produce content for social change; become internet citizens by teaching digital literacy to others and provides the five fundamentals for social change videos.

**Gaps**
There is a need for:

- Identification of social media innovators that could support the movement and counter the far-right.

- More digital strategists that can advise CSOs.
- Digital strategies and compelling digital content in sufficient quantity and quality.
- Digital skills development and literacy among CSOs globally.
- Gender coaching and support for digital engagement.
- More digital-focused programmes.

**Learnings:**

- While traditional media is useful for shifting policy attitudes, social media platforms, particularly, Facebook, are particularly important for shaping public opinion.
- Digital channels are a quick and inexpensive way to test messages.

**Discussion questions:**

- Could the Four Freedom Fund's Tech and Media Innovation Fund be applied elsewhere on other issues?
- Can Counterpart International's Innovation 4 Change programme be an approach that can be adopted/continued?

**Foundation spotlight:**

16 European foundations including **King Badouin Foundation, Fondation de France, Batory,Oak , OSF, Mott, Adessium, Luminate, Robert Bosch Stiftung** have created the **Civitates Initiative** in response to a growing concern for the "state of democracy" in Europe. Civitates' two complementary thematic sub-funds offer support to:

- Civil society coalitions that strengthen the resilience of the civil society sector in their respective countries, collectively and more effectively. 2019 grantees are in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia

Civil society groups that push for a strong and free digital public sphere in which public and democratic values are safeguarded. The Fund enables civil society to come together to fight its cause and search for new ways of working together. A key intervention is empowering civil society to tackle digital disinformation and a lack of transparency, accountability and information gatekeeping, which have enabled the manipulation of public discourse, through targeted regulatory responses.

By **supporting coalitions, associations, fora and networks**, it is working to build a strong cohort of CSOs that can defend civic space and inform and drive a digital reform agenda. Indirectly it is strengthening the digital literacy of the European public.

## 2.3.4 Pop culture

> *"Donors should better see that the nexus between art and social justice are people who come together for campaigns…that creatives are people who can build movements."*
>
> Interviewee

**Definition:**

The ideas, thinking, perceptions, beliefs, discussions, narratives and stories communicated through art, films, TV, games, music, the written word, comedy, digital and other means and absorbed and experienced by populations on a daily basis.[6]

**Example:**

**Unbound Philanthropy** - **Pop Culture Collaborative**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Minorities/social justice, USA**

This is a five-year hub to create high-impact partnerships that use pop culture to change narratives around people of colour, immigrants, refugees, Muslims and Native people, especially women, LGBTQI, disabled and others.

Its grantees are very diverse and highly connected **–** for example, the Collaborative has provided storyboarding input into the acclaimed and award-winning film, **Roma.** Its current grantees include an experimental social impact entertainment studio, an arts organization linking Native Americans to the entertainment industry, a theatre company producing works by artists of Middle Eastern decent and the National Domestic Workers Alliance. Accompanying these short-term grants are five fellowships to different types of artists.

**Gaps:**
There is a need for:

> More evaluation methodologies for pop culture initiatives to foster a better understanding of the impact of these  initiatives. Cultural initiatives outside of the USA.

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[6] Drawn from Unbound Philanthropy's Pop Culture Collaborative's definition

**Learnings:**

- Inclusive narratives have to become embedded into popular culture and normalized for narrative change to occur.
- Cultural change is the pre-cursor to political change.
- Investment should be made in arts and creativity that are accessible.
- Cultural initiatives should not be overtly cause-focused but more subtle in messaging.
- Some vehicles are better than others to reach the anxious middle, such as comedy.
- Experiment and invest in varied cultural strategies; at the very least, they build partnerships with cultural influencers.
- This is a long ball approach with no set model for success but requires sustained investment and out-of-the-box thinking.
- **[Science and Research Entertainment Exchange](),** which brokers a role between the entertainment industry and the scientific research and voluntary sectors, will shortly begin
  working on developing a theory of change/impact framework later this year.

**Discussion questions:**

1. What learning can foundations engaged in such initiatives share to inform cultural change strategies outside of USA?
2. How can we ensure we reach our target audiences and not just the converted?

**Foundation spotlight:**

**Compton Foundation's Courageous Storytelling** initiative in the US is aimed at disrupting the status quo or giving voice to new narratives on climate change, peace and national security, and reproductive rights and justice. It uses visual arts, comedy, drama, music, writing, creative social media that mixes the political, emotional and intellectual to effect public change on critical issues. Its 2018 grants range from support for investigative journalism and documentary photography to comedy as a tool to destigmatize abortion.

# 2.3.5 Youth engagement

> *"If we are to reach real peace in this world… we shall have to begin with children."*
>
> Mahatma Gandhi

**Definition:**

When young people are involved in making decisions that impact on their lives and in taking responsible, challenging actions to creative positive social change.

**Example:**

**Narrative4 – Story exchange**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Narratives/Social change, 12 countries in four continents**

An initiative that targets school children and young adults to help them improve their lives, their communities and the world through empathy. It uses the power of story exchange between pairs of people in a group to generate empathy, "shatter stereotypes and break down barriers". The aim is to turn this into action.

A four-step process includes objective-setting and building trust; listening to each other's stories; recounting the other's story in the first person to the group, before reflecting and developing self-awareness through group discussions.

So far, it has reached 200 schools with research showing an overall increase in positive emotions.

*Funded by several foundations including OSF, Atlantic Philanthropies, JP McManus Foundation*

**Gaps:**
There is a need for:

- Outreach programmes that engage children and young adults at school and community levels to build understanding and support for core values and to counter conservative action.
- Narrative programmes that work with schools and local communities, particularly in areas of high migration.
- Initiatives that empower young adults to design solutions and lead on progressive values.

- A clearer understanding of what youth programmes are already in place, what is working, and what more/else should be done.

## Learnings:

- Far-right and conservative groups are targeting young people as a key constituency, accessing children to bring them onside or engaging them in their activities
- The perception of an apathetic youth has given way to a growing and powerful demographic increasingly mobilized by concerns over climate change, unjust economic and social structures etc. The potential of this critical target audience for social change must be better tapped and protected.

## Discussion questions:

1. How much are youth being targeted in current foundation activities and in what ways?
2. What is the key entry point for youth engagement?

## Foundation spotlight:

As part of **Atlantic Philanthropies Migration Programme's** efforts to challenge, change and shape the ideas, preconceptions and beliefs of the Irish public and policy-makers on migration, it funded the Forum on Migration and Communications. FOMACS used arts, culture and media for individual migrant storytelling and to support NGOs in their advocacy work to change policy. Among its successes was the inclusion of material and outputs in the school national curriculum. All its work is archived at [www.fomacsretrospective.org/](www.fomacsretrospective.org/)

# 2.4 Capacity building

> *"Every week there is new research and there are 'aha!' moments. But then straight after, there is the 'yeah, but......' moment."*
>
> Interviewee

**Definition:**

The development and strengthening of human and institutional skills and resources in order to fully perform role functions and meet objectives.

**Example:**

**Four Freedoms Fund: Strategic Communications Investments**
Thematic and geographic focus – **Immigration, USA**.

Set up to provide much-needed support to CSOs working on immigration at State and local level, the Four Freedoms Fund (FFF) has built communications capacity at about 50 immigrant rights groups over a 10-year period. Less than eight years ago, half of the organizations had no communications personnel. Almost all now have communications staff and all have been trained.

The programme's objective is to ensure CSOs communicate better on immigration so as to impact on State policies.

It does this through a series of actions. Training is given via the Spin Academy, a technical resource entity. The latter provides a strategic communication "how to" for immigration activists through immersive "boot camps" with an evolving curricula. These are followed up with one-on-one mentorship for a number of hours. Training ranges from boot-camp to "graduate level".

FFF also convenes communications staff from different immigration organizations on specific issues such as social media to enable connection and collaboration. It complements this with one-off webinars on fundamental strategic communications knowledge and competencies, such as how to fundraise through communications.

Its communications capacity building and learning model is now going to be applied to **NEO Philanthropy's Anti-Trafficking Fund.**

The Four Freedoms Fund model is important for its operational focus at State and local level.  It allows for more tailored responses to specific contexts but is still able to

apply local learning to other parts of the country. It complements the work of FFF members who mostly fund nationally.

*Funding from 15 foundations including JPB, Luminate, Oak Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Ford Foundation and Unbound Philanthropy.*

## Gaps

There is a need for:

- Capacity building programmes outside of the USA, particularly in the global south.
- Increased strategic communications expertise across the world.
- Sustained communications education and mentorship approach to capacity building.
- Training of trainer programmes.
- Funding for capacity building and mentoring/fellowship programmes for sustained education and coaching.

## Learnings:

- Building capacity is not just about training. It's about walking people through a process. It's about mentoring over time. It's labour, time and resource intensive, but it is the most effective. Short bursts of training will not deliver what is needed.[7]
- OSF Eurasia's Training of Trainers Program has found it more effective to build capacity at individual country and specific issue level rather than taking a regional approach. It's intensive but the approach is working well.
- National trainings have deeper impact if they focus on concrete issues and goals for campaigns.
- Interventions that are not locally led or locally rooted will not work because they are not sustainable.
- Donors should prioritize communications work over expensive research.

## Discussion questions:

1. What else is needed to ramp up capacity building work other than more dedicated resources? Is the current approach to capacity building as effective as it needs to be?
2. How can we create a pipeline of communications talent at a grassroots level?
3. Can we build and share a network of strategic communications experts globally?
4. Is there a case for CSO re-examination of communications recruitment policies?

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[7] *Toward New Gravity,* The Narrative Initiative, 2017

**Foundation spotlight:**

**The Foundation for a Just Society's (FJS)** strategic communications support is integrated across all its programming on women's rights, LGBTQI, and gender and racial justice issues. It works in various parts of the USA, Mesoamerica, Francophone West Africa and South and South East Asia. Taking **a needs-led, experimental and iterative approach,** FJS has a communications strengthening fund to support partners to integrate strategic communications into their work based on their **individual needs**.  A second programme supports investment in communications infrastructure, communications skills building, digital campaigns and 'artivism'. Regular evaluations are used to develop a solid and sustained approach in its grant-making.

# 2.5 Media Engagement and Journalism

> *"Supporting journalism would work well on all issues. But so few of us are. Until there is a critical mass, philanthropy is reluctant to try."*
>
> Interviewee

## Definition:

The purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to make the best possible decisions about their lives, their communities, their societies, and their governments.[8]

## Example:

**Open Society Foundations Eurasia Program – Media and Information**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic Space, Eurasia**

Understanding the vital role of a free and independent press to democracy, **Open Society Foundations** has a wide range of programmes that strive to ensure press freedom, freedom of expression, access to knowledge and freedom of information around the world.

Through its **Eurasia Program,** a journalist network is being established in collaboration with openDemocracy to tackle anti-gender and anti-LGBTQI rights through capacity building and skills training. An Open Democracy 50/50 Fellowship jointly funded by the LGBTQI and women's rights programmes will be awarded.

The Eurasia Program is also providing support to journalists as part of its Media and Information work to protect press freedoms and to increase public access to information. Support includes media briefings such as that given to journalists prior to the 2018 World Congress of Families to help decode the language and better understand what the event was about.

## Gaps:
There is a need for more:

- Support for journalists facing human rights and security issues.
- Support for investigative journalism across the world.
- Better understanding of what kind of journalism support is most effective and needed.

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[8] *What is the purpose of journalism?* American Press Institute.
https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/what-is-journalism/purpose-journalism/

**Learnings:**

- Newspapers that focus on their communities and respond to their needs rather than to their readers are thriving.
- Awareness of a need to identify a better way of working with journalists so they understand the meaning behind the seemingly innocuous narratives of socially conservative groups.

**Discussion questions:**

1. How can more foundations be brought in to support journalism?
2. Is there a case for the creation of a multi-donor journalism fund to build capacity and support investigative journalism?
3. How can Foundations and CSOs better tap into growing constructive, solutions and ethical journalism initiatives without compromising journalistic integrity?

**Foundation spotlight:**

**The Foundation for a Just Society** has a **Movement journalism** programme. Working on women's rights, LGBTQI, gender and racial justice issues at a global and regional level, it supports organizations that provide resources to journalists who see their work as being about social, political, and economic transformation. The aim is to enable journalists to affect change from within their industry to produce more and better coverage of women's and LGBTQI rights movements. Interventions include funds for reporting, travel, equipment, and safety needs; networking spaces that connect movement-minded journalists to each other and to activists; and pipeline/retention opportunities for journalists from marginalized groups.

# 2.6 Movement building

> *"There is so little coordination internally. We need to work more closely together. The other side knows what it means to speak in unison. We have to find a way of not compromising on our values but to do something similar."*
>
> Interviewee

**Definition:**  Groups and individuals around the world with shared values and vision, working together informally or formally in strategic and sustained action to achieve a defined mission, generally concerning social, economic and/or political change and justice.

**Example:**

**350.Org/PIRC/NEON – Framing Climate Justice Project**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Environmental justice, UK**

A just-launched one-year project to align and strengthen the climate justice movement in the UK and to improve communications on climate change and its social, economic impact across every aspect of human life.

It aims to do this by bringing campaigners, activists and organizations together to work in pairs (accompaniment) during five multi-day sessions over a 10-month period. During the sessions, they will cover:  working together; vision; goals and the core story; how others' thinking of climate justice should impact on how to communicate; testing and how findings from testing change the way to communicate.

Expected outcomes include building relations and connections across the climate justice movement while absorbing new knowledge and skills on framing, communications, and evaluation.

**Gaps:**
There is a need for:

- Effective approaches or structures that create alignment within and among sectors and mobilize collaboration and coordination for greater impact.
- Greater awareness and coordination among donors of what each other are doing.
- Consolidation of information across projects.
- Learning convenes at philanthropy leadership level to find a common vision.
- A shared positive values based vision that can provide a counterpoint to the coherent vision promoted by the Right.

## Learnings:

- A successful strategy for getting a group of organizations working on the same issue but with different approaches to align on a narrative was to agree on shared objectives. This brought the group together and increased the likelihood of a defined narrative being used and shared afterwards.
- Organizations and donors need to rethink operations and grant-making and put strategic communications on par with policy and programming as a core strategy for the movement to achieve its goals.
- Learning exchanges & convenings, particularly between countries, are an impactful way of connecting, transferring and leveraging knowledge, expertise and innovation.
- The work of OSF's internal community of practice has resulted in a shift within the foundation's work culture. This includes increasing cross-programme collaboration to join forces to maximise resources and expertise and working with different sorts of grantees and actors.

## Discussion questions:

1. What systems or approaches are the most effective in creating connective tissue so organizations are better aligned and working in unison?
2. Or should foundations include collaboration as a grant condition to get the sector to work for common rather than individual goals?
3. Is there a need for a multi-donor cross-sectoral coordinator with a bird's eye view of planned/new projects to avoid duplication and ensure a more equitable use of resources across regions?
4. Should there be a strategic communications funders' network to strengthen donor collaboration and learning on communications-related programmes?
5. Should foundations create a more formal sharing system for evaluation findings to transfer knowledge in a more systematic manner?
6. How can foundations break the habit of working in siloes in favor of working across sectors and movements to advance shared strategies and counter common political opposition to their agendas?

## Foundation spotlight:

**Wellspring Philanthropic Fund** has a Cross-Programmatic Working Group on Evidence-Based Communications that brings together four programmes working on different issues. The group shares strategies on the most effective ways to support grantees in East Africa and Latin America to develop capacity on evidence-based communications on LGTBQI and women's rights, anti-corruption and citizen engagement. A combination of convening, grant-making and technical assistance has resulted in grantees engaging in public opinion mapping and message testing themselves.

# 3. CONCLUSIONS

Undoubtedly, the political, economic and social developments that have given rise to populist and conservative movements the world over are a **rude wake-up call**. There is a new sense of urgency among those working for positive social change. For philanthropy and civil society, the critical role that strategic communications plays in social change has surfaced as never before.

Although this mapping is not comprehensive, it illustrates a wide-range of Foundation and other supported strategic communications initiatives. In parallel, the process has identified several learnings and gaps that can be a launch pad for future Foundation action.

*Learnings*

Narrative change for social change requires **significant investment in multiple and simultaneous strategies.** These need to respond to the here-and-now as well as to the mid and long-term to deliver the cultural and political change required. At the heart of the solution is the ability of civil society to **come together** and effectively and strategically communicate its own **positive values-based vision** of the world.  Success will depend on inclusive narratives being embedded and **normalized** into **popular culture** for change to happen.

Strategic communications should focus on programmes that build values among **target groups, not issues** to achieve the goal of a shared vision of humanity. Universally, values around **family, friendships and safety** are important to everyone. And in communicating them, the choice of the advocate is as critical as the message itself. If the movement is to reconnect with the public, it needs to factor **emotion** into **public decision-making** and talk about **people**.

Interventions should be **goal-focused, needs-led** and inclusive of both grantees and expertise from outside the sector to more effectively **design solutions**. Experience has shown that it is possible to **adapt and replicate learning** from place to another and be successfully applied.

The mapping also reveals that though strategic communications initiatives are evident in various places, they are **not necessarily connected**. They are also heavily concentrated in the global North.

*Gaps*

A long-term culture of de-valuing communications across issues and accompanying shortage of funding, has resulted in a glaring **lack** of strategic communications **capacity and expertise** among CSOs, particularly outside of the USA. **A pipeline** of strategic communications and **digital expertise** is greatly needed. The **storytelling and dissemination** across the multiple platforms needed to reach diverse target audiences are **similarly compromised** by human and financial constraints. Outreach is consequently falling short at the critical final hurdle.

In an era of mass information and misinformation**,** meeting this challenge to reclaim the narrative is essential to all programme and policy goals on social change. **Sustained education and mentorship** to build capacity and expertise will require significant and committed funding.

Although the search for compelling narratives has led to a plethora of **public opinion research** in the USA, UK and Europe, such investment is **sparse elsewhere**. Ways to share and replicate research learning remain similarly scarce across the board.

Other key priority gaps to consider are **narrative work in the global South; youth outreach and engagement** on social change to counter far right inroads on this demographic; and creating the connective tissue to address the persistent challenge of sector **collaboration and coordination.**

With many gaps and demands across all areas and in the face of powerful and well-resourced conservative movements globally, finite and stretched resources will need to be used smartly to **maximise effectiveness.**

The long-game of narrative change means it is too early to identify the narratives and initiatives making the necessary inroads for change. However, there is an urgent need for greater clarity on what is impactful to recalibrate operations. Smart **evaluators** and **methodologies** that answer questions on deep indicators of change need recruiting and developing.

There is an **unprecedented opportunity** for philanthropy to unite as never before for common cause. Combining and sharing resources and expertise will deliver economies of scale while diversifying and scaling strategic action to reclaim civic space and re-open societies.

# 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish an on-going multi-donor pooled fund for strategic communications focused on capacity building, training of trainers, multi-media storytelling and dissemination support.

- Invest in digital strategies and digital strategists; identify and engage social media influencers.

- Develop a global network of (multi-lingual) strategic communications experts.

- Support localized strategic communications, narrative work and field building.

- Build national online repositories where needed to share research, learnings and tested narratives.

- Replicate spokespersons model that goes beyond media interviews to other countries.

- Consider outreach strategies for school children and young adults.

- Support journalism more.

- Jointly fund a cross-sectoral donor coordinator to avoid duplication on new strategic communications initiatives and ensure global spread of resources.

- Develop evaluation methodologies for narrative and cultural work.

# ANNEXES

# ANNEX 1

## A mapping of philanthropic strategic communications initiatives for narrative and social change

### Research (public opinion research and evidence generation)

- **Open Society Foundation Eurasia Program – Public Opinion Polling**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic Space, Ukraine**
  A pilot public opinion polling around values in Eurasia, but targeting Ukraine, is planned. A partner has yet to be identified.

- **British Future/Hope Not Hate** – **National Conversation on Immigration**
  Geographic focus: **Immigration, UK**
  A public consultation on immigration in the UK, the biggest of its kind and based on a model used by the Canadian Government. It engaged nearly 20,000 people in 60 locations across the country and regions and had responses from nearly 10,000 more people in an online survey. Its findings, a rich source of data, are being fed into policy through the Home Affairs Parliamentary Select Committee.
  **Funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation**, **Barrow Cadbury Trust, Jo Cox Foundation, the John Ellerman Foundation, the Social Change Initiative**

- **Migration Observatory**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration, UK**
  A research institute established with support from several philanthropic bodies to provide impartial, authoritative, data and evidence-based analysis to inform media, policy and public debate on migration and migrants. It provides a range of written and visual materials for all to use.
  **Funding from eight donors including Barrow Cadbury Trust, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and others, with previous support from Unbound Philanthropy and others.**

- **IMiX** - **IPSOS Mori – Migration Tracker public perception polling**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration and integration, UK**
  A public attitude tracking programme building on existing work to understand what target audiences in the UK are feeling on migration and integration on an on-going basis. Polling results will be used to inform a parliamentary group on migration and on ways to shift public opinions. Four waves of polling will be carried out over two years, starting late 2018. The views and priorities of CSOs working on migration and refugee issues were fed into the survey development. Polling will essentially use the same questions and involve a significant percentage of the same respondents to gauge changing public opinions over time. The Tracker is embedded at IMiX to ensure greater ownership and use of the research by CSOs.
  **Funded by Barrow Cadbury Trust and Unbound Philanthropy**

- **Migration Policy Group - ReSoma**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration, Europe**

An online platform to mobilize European researchers, experts and migration stakeholders and to facilitate evidence-based policy-making and identify research gaps.

- **d | part  - <span style="color:blue">Situation Room</span>**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic Space, Europe**
  Research in six countries (Germany, France, Hungary, Poland, Italy and Greece) to help CSOs, political actors and wider public to better understand and respond to deep political disruption responsible for closing civic space. The research focuses on the relationship between: communication and public attitudes; how policy changes impact political communication and public opinion, and what is the response. Regular analyses were published until end of 2018. A final overall conclusion paper is planned.

- **<span style="color:blue">Four Freedoms Fund</span>  Strategic Communications Investments**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration, USA**

1. **<span style="color:blue">#DefundHate Campaign</span> -** The FFF is funding research on messaging for the DefundHate campaign, a national campaign to significantly reduce the Federal immigration budget which in turn would push back on the trend of increasing detention and the building of a wall between USA and Mexico.

2. **Research on State and local Sanctuary Policies –** FFF supported grantees in Colorado, Oregon and Texas to conduct mixed method opinion research on so-called "sanctuary policies". These policies are proving effective in pushing back against the Federal government's efforts to expand deportation and detention by limiting how State and local authorities can cooperate with Federal immigration authorities.

3. **Immigration Research Consortium** – An immigration opinion research hub hosted by Opportunity Agenda. The hub has two main functions:  a monthly call to highlight opinion research projects for advocates, researchers and funders, and is a closed-source repository of US research that can be curated as a resource for the movement (the Library).  It was established in response to the findings of *What the Numbers Don't Tell Us* report. These highlighted, among other things, the need for greater collaboration among those working on similar issues and to avoid duplication by providing access to research already completed. The FFF is working on developing metrics to assess if the Research Consortium is having its intended impact with findings of the evaluation due in 2020.
   **Funded by 15 donors, including Oak Foundation, Open Society Foundations and Unbound Philanthropy**

- **Goodwin Simon Strategic Research (GSSR)**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Women's rights and LGBTQ rights, Guatemala, Colombia, Mexico, Kenya**
  Wellspring Philanthropic Fund commissioned GSSR to launch a research project to inform the development of strategic messages that seek to shift social norms related to women's rights and LGBTQ rights within specific country contexts.

- **Wellspring Philanthropic Fund Evidence-Based Communications Fund**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Human rights, East Africa**

The fund was set up to support seven local NGOs to research, test, and/or evaluate communications that target specific audiences and seek to change knowledge, attitudes, and/or behaviours related to particular social justice issues.

- **Wellspring Philanthropic Fund** – **Cross-Programmatic Working Group on Evidence-Based Communications**

    Multiple programmes at Wellspring Philanthropic Fund support messaging research. Four Wellspring programmes on different issues share strategies on how best to support grantees in East Africa and Latin America to develop capacity to engage in evidence-based communications. Through convening, grant making, and technical assistance, Wellspring has supported grantees to engage in mapping public opinion and testing messages.  In addition, Wellspring has supported the development of local capacity to research and test persuasive messages. The work has included grants to LGBT organizations in Kenya and Europe, to women's rights activists in Guatemala, Mexico and Columbia, and to anti-corruption and citizen engagement organizations in Uganda. As a result of Wellspring support, organizations have created toolkits and guides on message testing for a variety of civil society organizations.

## **Narrative change**

- **NEON/FrameWorks/PIRC/NEF** -  Framing the Economy
    Thematic and geographic focus: **Economic/Social justice, UK**
    A two-year project to come up with a new story on the economy based on interviews, surveys, focus groups with the British public as well as literature reviews. The project will work with 50 campaigners and communicators in using the findings to better communicate. As part of the project, NEON is leading a review of communications infrastructure to "look into some of the causes of progressive communications failures and what practices, programmes and institutions" could help respond to these.

- **NEON** – **Spokesperson Network**
    Thematic and geographic focus: **Social, economic, environmental justice, UK**
    NEON – a movement-building network of organizers from more than 900 CSOs, has created a spokesperson network. It provides training for its network members and places media interviews on a wide range of issues, ensuring authentic and credible voices are part of the media narrative.

- **OnRoad** – **Spokesperson Networks**
    Thematic and geographic focus: **Transgender, Sexual/Domestic Violence, Poverty, Irregular migrants, UK**
    A British charity that works to improve media coverage of misrepresented groups and issues. It does this by connecting journalists and media professionals from factual and fictional programmes such as soap operas, drama, films etc., with people who have lived experience of the issues being covered to ensure content is as authentic as possible. It gives those people the opportunity to shape and lead narrative change in the media. It currently has four different networks – transgender, sexual/domestic violence, poverty and young irregular migrants. It ensures those in the networks have the right support,

training, mentoring and contacts to do media work well and safely through a long and
gradual process.
**Funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Unbound
Philanthropy**

- **Social Change Initiative (SCI)** - **Migration Narrative Programme**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration/Refugee, Europe**
SCI is working with selected partners to shift the narrative on migration and refugee
protection in France, Germany, Greece and Italy, and is supporting work in Ireland and
the UK.
SCI is partnering with the **International Centre for Policy Advocacy (ICPA)** in
**Germany** through the **New Migration Narratives** project. This latter initiative has
devised a curriculum, carries out workshops and provides training, support, campaign
materials and outreach through the Narrative Change Lab. ICPA is due to develop a
methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of reframing the migration narrative in
Germany to be positive and solution-focused.
**Funding by Atlantic Philanthropies** (2017-2019)

- **More in Common (MiC)**
Thematic and geographic focus**: Immigration/Social cohesion, Europe/USA**
A positive narrative building international initiative established in 2017 as a result of
research that concluded public opinion rather than policy lack was the greatest handicap
to a humane response on migration/refugees. It aims to make societies more resilient to
increasing polarization and social division by providing resources to inform public opinion,
and to create a broad coalition of unusual allies that would amplify positive narratives and
catalyse a community-based movement. Its target audience is the "anxious middle" with
messaging highlighting progressive patriotic values, though it takes a more nuanced and
location-based approach to identifying target audiences. It has produced various public
perception research pieces on different countries and has established hubs in USA, UK,
France and Germany.
**Funding from Oak Foundation OSF, Omydiar, Atlantic Philanthropies, Unbound
Philanthropy, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Emerson
Collective as well as local funds**

- **Our Story – The hub for American narratives, USA**
Thematic and geographic focus – **Social justice, USA**
The aim of the hub is to build capacity among progressive organizations and leaders to
develop powerful and values-based communications on core American beliefs. It does
this partly through training and partly by supporting the development and application of
narratives on specific issues. It uses public opinions research and testing methods and
provides open-source narrative guides/templates on a range of issues backed up by Our
Story's own full narrative on those themes.
**Funded by Proteus Fund and Proteus Action**

- **DEMOS – Race-Class Narrative Project**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Democracy/Inclusive Societies, USA**
The project provides State and National research to develop an empirically tested
narrative on race and class that resonates with all working people, mobilizes
communities in democratic engagement and changes narratives in everyday
conversations. The research identifies how to build a multi-racial progressive coalition by

tackling the connections between racial divisions and economic hardships. The RCN project encourages others to use its findings and resources in their campaigns and to work with the project in tailoring the race/class narrative to their campaigns and strategic messaging.

- **America's Voice – Counter Narratives Research and Messaging**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration, USA**
  Using a Campaign approach and serving as a communications 'hub' for the Immigrant Rights sector, **America's Voice** produces blogs and other communications products to mobilize values-based public action and policy reform to ensure employment, civil and political rights for undocumented migrants.

- **Fine Acts Lab – Narrative prototypes**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Anti-corruption TBC, Bulgaria**
  OSF Eurasia Program will test run a lab with Fine Acts Lab that brings artists and technologists to work together for 3 days on a specific issue and to create prototype products. They will be mentored by organizations working on that issue. The winning product, chosen by PR agencies, marketing companies and other private sector entities, will be produced by the organizations as open source. The initiative builds relationships between unusual allies and identifies social champions among the private and public sector.  A possible theme for testing could be anti-corruption.
  **Funding – Open Society Foundations Eurasia Program**

- **Atlantic Philanthropies and the Ford Foundation - The Narrative Initiative**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Social change, USA**
  A 10-year joint collaborative set up to outlive Atlantic Philanthropies. It aims to change narratives to achieve social change through a two-track bespoke approach that would equip sector organizations and leaders with the knowledge and skills to use narrative to effect change, and to support and enlarge this field. Training and education on narrative use is provided through Fellowship programmes with Fellows embedding narrative in their work. The second track is to develop a network and repository of best practice on narrative that could be integrated into programmatic work and rolled out initially in the USA/Europe. The Initiative kicked off with a "living" tool *Toward New Gravity*  that would chart a course on how to create new narratives to effect change.

- **Just Labs – Reclaiming Civil Society Space: Game Changing Narratives for Human Rights**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic Space and Human Rights, Global**
  An agile and experimental testing and learning initiative through practical workshops aimed at identifying core ingredients for effective narrative change strategies to claim back civic space globally. Involving activists as well as actors from a wide range of fields and disciplines outside of the human rights movement to ensure fresh thinking, the project focused on three sets of countries: almost closed (e.g. Cambodia); dangerously closing (e.g. Hungary), and open but with indicators of closure (e.g. South Africa). The workshops used a product design methodology to develop prototypes for individual country contexts to address specific narrative challenges chosen by activists.  Narrative

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strategies based on community, culture and cooperation were identified, with 12 prototypes highlighting that "what one does is the message" and putting the emphasis on human rather than on rights.

In a phase 2, the Civil Society Narrative Hub will test core narrative change ingredients for replicability in particularly challenging contexts where there is a huge know-how and investment gap.

**Funding from FGHR and OSF**

- **Fund for Global Human Rights/Just Labs – The Civil Society Narrative Hub**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic Space and Human Rights, Global**
  A three to five-year grant-making project to foster experimentation on narrative change by CSOs that builds on the work of the Just Labs workshops of 2018. Operating as a donor collaborative fund, the Civil Society Narrative Hub will test core ingredients of narrative change strategies in real-world local contexts and identify variables as well as issues that are the best vehicles for narratives. The Hub will also provide tools to CSOs to roll out, test and change new narratives; collate, monitor, evaluate and disseminate learning to identify new narratives; build new partnerships and generate a broader level of donor support for such work. Expanding the basic scope and geographic range of the Hub will be dependent on widening donor engagement.
  **Funding from FGHR, OSF, US-Based Private Foundation**

- **RBF/AJWS/FGHR/JASS – Power Analysis Collaboration**
  Thematic and geographic focus – **Human Rights, Kenya**
  An 18-month project working with Kenyan CSOs to apply the Power Analysis framework as a diagnostic and strategic solutions tool to address closing civic space in the country. As a first step, a narrative analysis will be defined to better understand the drivers behind narratives that delegitimize and criminalize civil society. Narrative strategies will then be developed to neutralize negative narratives, re-position human rights organizations and human rights as a universal standard, and shift public opinion to ensure strong and active support for CSOs in Kenya.

- **Friends of the Earth Europe – Narrative Campaign**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Social and political change, EU**
  FOE Europe has formed a coalition of approximately 40 organizations including those working on human rights, rule of law and democracy, to work on and build a narrative on "*the Europe we want: Working to building a just, free, democratic EU*" ahead of the EU parliament elections in May 2019.
  **Foundation funding including from: European Climate Foundation, Isvara Foundation, James M.Goldsmith Foundation, Adessium Foundation, Mava Foundation, The Grassroots Foundation, The Jennifer Altman Foundation**

## Dissemination

## Storytelling and media engagement

- **Equally Ours**
  Thematic and geographic focus - **Human rights, UK**.

A communications and campaigns hub in the agency model set up by eight British charities. It seeks to develop professional communications capacity and supports Member-led campaigns. It works with people and organizations to tell and share stories on everyday human rights challenges. It also works with the media and carries out research on public attitudes to human rights. Its campaign, **Rights for Life Any Time, Any Age, Any One** is a strong example of the effectiveness of a showing and telling approach in making human rights relevant to everyone in society. It is identifying agencies who can do pro bono work on campaigns and will produce short videos for social media distribution aimed at reaching the persuadable middle.
**Funding from the Aziz Foundation, Barrow Cadbury Trust, the Baring Foundation, the Esmée Fairnbairn Foundation, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the Thomas Paine Initiative, Trust for London, with Oak Foundation as a previous donor**

- **Rights Info**
Thematic and geographic focus – **Human Rights, UK**
A digital media platform producing credible and accessible multi-media human rights news to counter disinformation and negative frames. It does this by informing and educating through online resources such as infographics and enabling CSOs to communicate positively on human rights by sharing resources and expertise.
**Funding includes Oak Foundation, Aziz Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the Legal Education Foundation, the Allen and Overy Foundation and the Peoples Postcode Trust**

- **IMiX (Integration and Migration Exchange)** Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration, UK**
Set up as a communications agency for the migration and refugee sector by a group of donors, IMiX is facilitating better communications on the issue by engaging targeted media and providing strategic communications support for the sector. The latter includes day-to-day practical help, advice and strategic input on digital engagement, campaigns and messaging developed from research and polling. It is now focusing on building sustainable communications capacity and reframing the migration debate with a small number of like-minded organizations to create a more welcoming environment for migrants and refugees. The latter is planned through narrative and counter-narrative content production developed through research and data collaboration, and by building alliances between community organizations across the UK. A regional coordinator is being recruited for the West Midlands as a first step in localizing support to the regions with funding from Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
**Funding includes from Paul Hamlyn, Oak Foundation**

- **The Opportunity Agenda**
Thematic and geographic focus: Immigration, Economic Opportunity, Criminal Justice, Human Rights, USA.

A social justice communications lab that develops narratives/messaging, analyses public opinions/attitudes and conducts media analysis and social media scans. Findings and communications material are open sourced. Delivers training to sector leaders through Communications Institutes.

- **Rethink Media**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Democracy, Peace and Security, Rights and Inclusion, USA**
  A not-for-profit strategic media agency focused on building the communications capacity of advocates, leaders, groups and others working on democracy, peace and security, and rights and inclusion in order to shift public discourse. Its service provides shared resources and agreed upon messages that avoid duplication, access to media technologies, training and media outreach support and advice.

## Campaigning and advocacy

- **European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM) -**
  Sub-Fund on **Communicating on Migration in a Changing Environment**, **EU.**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration, EU**
  EPIM provides behind-the-scenes capacity and content support for EU-wide civil society organizations. It focuses on strengthening strategic communications capacity through a varied set of approaches: organizational development, coordination and exchange meetings, large convenings and small-scale training. Its current support to CSOs include:

  - **Migration Policy Group (MPG),** a think-and-do tank in Brussels which has created a campaign coordination team to enable European CSOs to carry out joint campaigns. The Brussels-based structure coordinates coalitions of CSOs in various EU Member States as well as in the Belgian capital on the delivery of key messages, hooks and communications material as well as on strategy.

  - Strategic communications capacity building for **PICUM, Refugees Welcome International** and **the European Network on Statelessness**. Activities include: organizational restructuring and the mainstreaming of communications processes; the development and upgrade of communication strategies and implementation plans and the testing of new approaches.

  - **EPAM CSO Coordination group in Brussels -** a loose network of non-governmental organization (NGO) communications staff engaged in advocacy which meet regularly to exchange and coordinate on communications work. It is serving as a forum for information, knowledge sharing and exchange rather than collaboration.

  **Funding from EPIM's 14 partner foundations contribute collectively to communications work with OSF, Adessium, Barrow Cadbury Trust, Oak Foundation and Porticus playing a lead role**

- **More in Common (MiC) (see above)**
  Thematic and geographic focus**: Immigration/Social cohesion, Europe/USA**
  In France, partner organization **More in Common** piloted programmes with the Catholic Church, NGOs and five mayors of areas with mixed populations. This included research on the opinions of Catholics later used as the basis for producing successful messages to engage priests, Catholic organizations and believers.
  **Funded by SCI**

- **British Future**
  Thematic and geographic focus – **Immigration, UK.**
  Originally a communications agency established by a group of funders, including Oak Foundation, as part of a "Changing Minds" collaboration. The aim was to change attitudes and bring strategic communication approaches initiated in the USA to the UK migration sector. This was to be achieved by developing proactive "pervasive values-based narratives and messages" through attitudinal research/polling and their dissemination and placement in mainly hostile media channels. British Future evolved into more of a 'think tank' providing strong analysis and vision rather than serving as a communications hub for the sector producing day-to-day materials and messages.
  **Funded by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, Unbound Philanthropy, John Ellerman Foundation, Trust for London, the Sigrid Rausing Trust, with Oak Foundation as a previous donor**

## Digital media and technology

- **Civitates Fund**
  Thematic and geographic focus – **Democracy, civic space, EU**
  Hosted by the **European Network of Foundations** in Brussels, Civitates' focus is on upholding democratic values in Europe. It does this by strengthening civil society to more effectively respond to shrinking civil space and by tackling digital disinformation and the manipulation of public discourse. Remit priorities include supporting advocacy and initiatives for regulatory responses to the challenges of the digital environment and building a strong cohort of civil society organizations (CSOs) that inform and drive a reform agenda while indirectly strengthening the digital literacy of the European public. Its 2019 grantees are coalitions, associations, fora and networks in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.
  **Funding from 16 European Foundations including Oak Foundation**

- **Four Freedoms Fund – Tech and Media Innovation Fund**
  Thematic and geographic focus **– Immigration, USA**
  An initiative that aims to fund experimental efforts that leverage the speed and scaling potential of civic technology and digital media to shift narrative and move key audiences to advance the rights of immigrants and refugees.
  **Funding from 15 donors, including Oak Foundation, Open Society Foundations and Unbound Philanthropy**

- **Counterpart International Innovation 4 Change**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic Space, Global**
  A global network of 200 individuals and organizations set up as a "demand driven technical resource lab" for six regional but connected hubs. It uses technology to defend and strengthen civic society. The network is connected to an ever-increasing group of private sector entrepreneurs, ICT and digital security experts, donors and innovation leaders to ensure long-term sustainability of their work. All six regions have identified their own challenges and technical solutions to address some of them. I4C Africa or Hub

Afrique, for example, is tackling transparency, good governance and accountability through two platforms – WE-Protect and WE-Account; the East Asia Hub is concentrating on digital security for activists and Latin America on complex social, economic and political problems.

- **YouTube - [Creators of Change](#)**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Social cohesion**, **Global**

  A YouTube initiative that spotlights, mentors and promotes inspirational 'Creators' who use the social media platform to stimulate productive conversations on difficult issues and make a positive impact on the world. Those picked to be Ambassadors and Fellows are helped to make their video 'impact projects' on any issue but with the aim of bringing people together and increase tolerance and understanding. It has seven national local chapters and an Asia-Pacific regional one. In Indonesia, for example, the project has teamed up with a local NGO to train students on creating change through video in a campaign #1nDonesia. In Germany, the Creators have joined forces under the banner #NichtEgal (It Matters) in a move to counter online hate.

- **openDemocracy [50.50 Platform](#)**

  Thematic and geographic focus: Women's rights, GlobalopenDemocracy 50.50 publishes critical and in-depth coverage of gender, sexuality and social justice. It is a platform for debate and analysis, embracing a plurality of voices from journalists and scholars to activists and citizens.

  **Funding from the Oak Foundation & Open Society Foundation.**

## **Pop culture**

- **[Compton Foundation](#) – Courageous Storytelling**
  Thematic and geographic focus – climate change, peace and national security, and reproductive rights and justice, **Mostly USA based**.
  Grants are aimed at disrupting the status quo or giving voice to new narratives, using visual arts, comedy, drama, music, writing, creative social media that mixes the political, emotional and intellectual to effect public change on critical issues.

- **[Nathan Cummings Foundation](#) – Voice, Creativity and Culture, USA**
  A programme that aims to change the dominant narratives on race, class, gender, and ethnicity and to build solidarity and empathy through art, media and cultural criticism.

- **Unbound Philanthropy** - **[Pop Culture Collaborative](#)**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Minorities/social justice, USA**
  A five-year hub created in 2016 to create "high-impact partnerships" aimed at leveraging the reach and power of pop culture to change the narratives around people of colour, immigrants, refugees, Muslims and Native people, especially women, LGBTQI, disabled etc., Current grantees include an experimental social impact entertainment studio, an arts organization that links Native Americans with the US entertainment industry, a national domestic workers alliance, a theatre company producing work of theatre artists of Middle

East descent, etc.. The programme also has a senior fellowship component and is currently supporting five fellowships covering different types of artists.

- **Opportunity Agenda – [Creative Strategies](#)**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Social justice, USA**
  Opportunity Agenda convenes, connects and supports artists, media makers and activists as a key strategy for amplifying the impact of creativity and culture on social justice narratives. Through its **Creative Change Retreat and Strategy sessions**, artists, media makers and activists identify strategies on collaborative action and build relationships designed to bring social justice to the public domain through art.  Through its **Creative Change Awards**, it honours innovation, bringing cutting edge work to large audiences. It also provides communications and research resources for cultural leaders so as help artists become effective spokespeople and activists to better understand how to work with creative people.

- **Skylight – [Solidarilabs](#)**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Human Rights, Colombia**
  An initiative designed to bring film-makers, artists and storytellers with human rights activists in Colombia to form networks that shift cultural perceptions through new and impactful narratives for social change.

- **Hivos/RBS – [Vital Civic Spaces](#)**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic Space, Europe**
  A solutions-testing lab initiative that aims to better understand the dynamics of what constitutes a vital civil space in the 21st century. It explores questions such as to why some are able to open up space for their agendas and others not, and what this means for Foundations. The approach is local and creative. Starting in Vienna in a partnership with a community arts lab, the project aims to identify how community arts can stop social fragmentation and build empowerment.

- **Prague Civil Society Centre – [Gamification for Civil Society](#)**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civil Society, Eastern Europe/Central Asia**
  An organization aiming to empower civil society through innovative and tech-based solutions. A priority is to support creative approaches to dealing with social issues and movement-build by creating new synergies across sectors. Its works to create communities that bring together artists, journalists, activists, film-makers, tech experts, bloggers and others to strengthen the resilience of civil society actors. It has begun a series of 'Gamechanger' workshops to show how "gamification" can be adopted by civil society to reach new audiences and garner more support. Gamification involves the use of game mechanics to make information interactive and engaging, allowing a person to shape their own story.
  **Funding: Oak Foundation, CS Mott Foundation, EU Commission, and four governments.**

- **Funders' Initiative for Civil Society – Comedy for Change, India**
   (See entry under Collaboration)

- **Movies that Matter**

Thematic and geographic focus: **Human Rights, Global**
An initiative that supports independent human rights film festivals in developing or
countries with restrictive space to promote greater dialogue on human rights issues,
including LGBTQI rights. Oak funding is prioritizing LGBTQI projects. Support for MTM is
an opportunity to test alternative routes for outreach and potential activism through visual
arts. To help gauge the impact of such events, MTM have initiated a Festivals Impact Lab
to identify impact strategies and evaluation methods. A number of pilots using different
methodologies to evaluate the impact of some of the film festivals have been launched.
**Funding from Oak Foundation until 2019**

## Youth engagement

- **Narrative4 – Story exchange**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Narratives/empathy, 12 countries**
  Narrative4 uses a story exchange method between pairs of people in a group to generate
  empathy and turn it into action and works primarily in schools. This is done through a
  four-step process that: sets objectives; involves the listening and recounting of each
  other's stories in the first person; and generating reflection and self-awareness through
  group discussions. So far, it has reached 200 **schools** and could be a useful strategy for
  youth engagement.
  **Funded by several foundations including OSF, Atlantic Philanthropies, JP
  McManus Foundation**

## Capacity building

- **Open Society Foundations** Eurasia Program – Communications
  **Capacity/Narratives**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic Space, Eurasia**
  Several strategic communications activities are being undertaken to build movements to
  tackle reactionary backlash and the closing of civil space in a region where community
  mobilization is in its infancy. Among them:

  1. **Training of trainers for Community Organizing –** This began with
  a Eurasia regional training by the Leading Change Network in 2017. Lessons
  learnt from that led to training at national rather than regional level for deeper
  impact. The focus was on concrete issues for campaigns with a clear purpose to
  develop narratives. In 2018, training was conducted with the Armenia anti-
  discrimination coalition and thematically focused on minority rights, LGBTQI and
  women as a distinct portfolio. In 2019, the focus is broader and will cover the
  reactionary backlash to the previous year's work through public discourse,
  values, opinion polling and narratives. An important outcome is that OSF is now
  building its own cohort of Russian speaking trainers.

  2. **Campaign Communications Webinars -** A 15-part series of hour-long
  webinars breaking down all communications aspects of campaigns. Targeted

grantees in the Eurasia region working on a range of issues, including women's rights, LGBTQ, anti-corruption, human rights etc., will have access to the webinars in a strategy to broaden their outreach through outside-in training. These will be launched at the end of February/early March 2019.

- **Four Freedoms Fund: Strategic Communications Investments**
Thematic and geographic focus – **Immigration, USA**.
Communications capacity building for about 50 immigrant rights groups so far at mostly State and local levels on how to do communications better and impact on State policies. Training includes convenings on issues such as social media, "boot camps" at SPIN Academy and webinars. FFF is now looking at what other technical assistance should be provided to grantees.
**Funding from 15 donors, including Oak Foundation, Open Society Foundations and Unbound Philanthropy**

- **Neo Philanthropy – Anti-Trafficking Fund**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Human trafficking, USA**
A strategic communications initiative that replicates the immigration rights strategic communications initiative of the FFF to develop the fledgling communications capacity of the anti-trafficking sector. Priority areas for investment include communications capacity building, the creation of fellowships/mentoring, a communications working group, narrative change messaging and framing research, webinars and other activities to strengthen fundamental communications capacities and knowledge.

- **Climate Justice Resilience Fund (CJRF)**
Thematic and geographic focus: Climate justice, Global
CJRF seeks to amplify the voice and build the communication capacities of those that are the first hit, first to respond, and first to adapt to the effects of climate change. The aim is to support these communities to better communicate the solutions they have to help reduce risks, manage shocks, rebound and continue charting a sustainable development path.

**Funding from the Oak Foundation**

- **Foundation for a Just Society – Strategic communications**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Women's and Girls' rights, LGBTQI, Gender and Racial Justice, Regional (South USA, Mezzo America, Francophone West Africa, South and South East Asia) and Global**

  Strategic communications are integrated across all areas of the foundation's work. Initiatives are needs-led, experimental, iterative, and regularly evaluated to determine their efficacy for organizations and movements with findings used in the development of a solid and sustained approach. Currently, the following initiatives are in place:

  1. **Communications strengthening fund** – existing partners can receive supplementary funds to support organizational learning on the value of strategic communications and to begin integrating it into their work. The fund was created following the evaluation of an 18-month communication strengthening programme through accompaniment for 12 FJS partners in the Southeast of the

USA. The programme was co-created with the partners and flexibly designed to be responsive to their individual and changing needs.

2. **Movement communications infrastructure** – FJS provides support for organizations that leverage communications as a core strategy to build constituencies and influence narratives. This includes using research, "artivism", digital campaigns and communications skills building.

- **ReFrame Mentorship**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Social Justice, USA**
  ReFrame seeks to train the next generation of strategic communicators for a variety of social justice movements. It uses a long-term mentorship model to imbed communication know-how inside organisations and by extension, the movements they enable.

- **Spitfire Strategies**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Social Justice, USA**
  Spitfire provides capacity building for organisations and individuals to develop and implement strategic communication plans to increase the impact of their work and achieve their campaigning goals.

- **EPIM and SCI - Joint Events**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration, EU**
  Joint events in 2019 will target Pan European strategic communications skills training. A mapping in early 2019 of the strategic communication needs and interests of a broader group of organizations will inform the content and structure of two workshops tentatively scheduled for June and November 2019.

## Media engagement and journalism

- Agencia Publica
  Oak Foundation provides core support to Agencia Pública to promote high quality, non-partisan investigative journalism in Brazil to help strengthen Brazilian democracy. The first of its kind in Brazil, Agencia Pública promotes a model of not-for-profit journalism to maintain its independence. It aims to produce high quality non-partisan investigative reports in the public interest on current important Brazilian and Latin American issues from the people's point of view.

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- [MacArthur Foundation](#) – **Journalism and Media Programme**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Democracy, USA**
  A three-pronged media initiative aimed at strengthening democracy through support for just and inclusive narratives by: a) supporting reporting by professional non-profit journalism that brings to light critical, under-reported issues, b) supporting artful non-fiction multi-media storytelling that inspires self-reflection and public discourse, and c) leveraging "citizen journalism" to express and organize itself for social change.

- **Open Society Foundation Eurasia Program – Communications Capacity/Narratives**

Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic Space, Eurasia**

1. **Support to journalists –** A quick briefing was carried out with journalists to help them decode the language of the World Congress of Families before their meeting in Moldova in 2018.  Support to journalists is part of the Eurasia Program's Media and Information work to protect press freedoms and to increase public access to information.

2. **Journalist Network -** A journalist network is being built in Eurasia in a collaboration with Open Democracy to tackle anti-gender and anti-LGBTQI rights through capacity building and skills training. An Open Democracy 50/50 Fellowship jointly funded by LGBTQI and women's rights programmes will be awarded.

- **The Independent and Public-Spirited Media Foundation**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Independent Media, India**
  It promotes "excellence in independent, public-spirited and socially impactful journalism". It provides both financial and other types of assistance to organizations that produce public-interest information to raise awareness and understanding of issues, and disseminate it through digital, social and traditional media.

- Marco Zero Conteúdo
  To highlight Oak's Joint Brazil Programme issues through the production of multi-media content and its distribution through an on-line news portal and social media. In addition, Marco Zero Conteúdo will conduct fact checking and investigative journalism to inform public debate around the Joint Brazil Programme issues. The Joint Brazil Programme aims to improve the lives of the most marginalised communities by promoting inclusive, efficient, democratic processes that operate in the best interests of all citizens of the Recife Metropolitan area, irrespective of gender, age or socio-economic position.

- **Foundation for a Just Society – Movement journalism**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Women's and Girls' rights, LGBTQI, Gender and Racial Justice, Regional (South USA, Mezzo America, Francophone West Africa, South and South East Asia) and Global**
  It supports organizations that provide resources to journalists who see their work as being about social, political, and economic transformation. The aim is to enable journalists to affect change from within their industry to produce more and better coverage of women's and LGBTQI rights movements. Interventions include funds for reporting, travel, equipment, and safety needs; networking spaces that connect movement-minded journalists to each other and to activists; and pipeline/retention opportunities for journalists from marginalized groups.

- **Rockefeller Brothers Fund – Investigative journalism**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Democracy, development/Western Balkans**
  A programme of core support for almost all investigative journalism/media in the Western Balkans, focusing mainly on: corruption; political corruption; organized crime; Russian

interference, and freedom of speech with flexibility to "use" support on other issues that they see fit which serve the public interests of truth and justice. The grantees are:

Balkans Investigative Reporting Network - http://birn.eu.com/ (Regional/Kosovo)

Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project https://www.occrp.org/en (Regional)

Crime and Corruption Reporting Network – KRIK (Serbia)  https://www.krik.rs/en/about-us/

Cenzolovka (freedom of information) (Serbia) https://www.cenzolovka.rs/

Centre for Investigative Journalism of Serbia – CINS –
(Serbia) https://www.cins.rs/english

Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina  - IJAV (Serbia) - http://www.ndnv.org/

Truthometer – Istinomer – (Serbia)  http://www.istinomer.rs/

35mm (human rights and the rule of law) – (http://www.nvo35mm.org/en/ (Montenegro)


- **Institute for Global Affairs, LSE – Arena Project**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Migration, Italy**
  As part of the Arena Project which aimed to counter misinformation and false narratives through the development of an appropriate regulatory framework and to penetrate echo chambers to rebut corrosive and misleading discourse, an initiative in Italy paired the centre-right national newspaper Corriere Della Sera with technologists and journalists to change the tenor of and depolarize the debate on migration. It aimed to do this using a combination of algorithm analysis and constructive or solutions journalism.
  **Funding partly from Oak Foundation**


- **My Country Talks – Political dialogue**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic space/Immigration, Europe**
  An initiative that started with German media Die Zeit aimed at bringing people together (2 individuals for each encounter) from totally opposing viewpoints on different issues for a dialogue aimed at identifying common ground/values/consensus as a basis for addressing conflict/social and political polarization. The initiative has the essential element of *de-Othering.* The success of the first project a couple of years ago has led to other media in Germany and in other countries to adopt the initiative. This is an example of constructive journalism.


- **Solutions Journalism Network (SJN)**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic space, Global**
  SJN seeks to spread the practice of solutions journalism: rigorous reporting on responses to social problems. It seeks to rebalance the news, so that every day people are exposed to stories that help them understand problems and challenges, and stories that show potential ways to respond. To that end, SJN trains journalists on adopting solutions journalism approaches; encourages publications and media outlets to move away from fear-based to more solutions-oriented reporting; and brings journalists together to learn, share and collaborate.

- **Video Volunteers**
  Video Volunteers has created a network of Correspondent Changemakers in India to: empower communities; foster leadership; and raise awareness of local needs and issues. Video Volunteers seeks to empower the most disadvantaged communities by building their capacity to create, produce and disseminate their own content.

- **Constructive Institute:**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic space, Global**
  The Constructive Institute is an independent organisation that lies at the heart of the constructive journalism movement. Its mission is to combat trivialisation and degradation of journalism by emphasising reporting that is more accurate, balanced and solutions-focused. The institute helps journalists and news organisations to apply constructive reporting in their daily work through providing access to an inspiring best practices portal, a world-class fellowship programme, relevant training curricula, and initiating rigorous independent academic research.

## Movement building

- **350.Org/PIRC/NEON – [Framing Climate Justice Project](#)**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Environmental justice, UK**
  A just-launched project to strengthen the climate justice movement and to improve communications on climate change and its impact across every aspect of human life. It will do this through five sessions over 10 months that bring campaigners, activists and organizations together to work in pairs (accompaniment) during sessions on: working together; vision; goals and the core story; how others' thinking of climate justice should impact on how to communicate; and testing and how findings from testing change the way to communicate.

- **European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM) -**
  Sub-Fund on **[Communicating on Migration in a Changing Environment](#)**
  **Narrative Building Workshops with Thematic Fund Grantees**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration, EU**
  A pilot training has been carried out on EU Mobility to understand the current narrative on the issue and to identify which narrative the four organizations working EU Mobility could share. This model could apply to four other thematic areas, including Communicating on Migration, as a way to agree on shared objectives and facilitate a pulling-together approach.

- **[Migration Exchange](#)**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration, UK**
  A donor collaborative aiming to improve understanding of public attitudes on migration and their link to politics, policy and communities. It uses this knowledge to improve the accuracy and depth of conversations on migration, integration and identity, and build public support for welcoming communities.
  **Funded by 10 Foundations and philanthropic organizations including BCT, Oak Foundation, OSF, Unbound Philanthropy and Paul Hamlyn Foundation.**

- **Proteus Fund Hosted - Security and Rights Collaborative**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Democracy, USA**
A national donor collaborative set up post 9-11 supporting supports Muslim, Arab and South Asian communities to be full participants of civil society, fight anti-Muslim xenophobia, change the narrative and work in common cause with allies across a range of social and racial justice movements. A communications hub A communications hub was developed through ReThink Media.. The Collaborative has been at the heart of the push back against anti-Muslim sentiment and action.

- **Unbound Philanthropy - Convening on Sanctuary projects**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration, USA**
A convening is being planned for actors and advocates working on sanctuary projects to share their learnings from research and its implementation in live campaigns. The aim is to get a better understanding on the best ways to implement research already done on sanctuary policies, with a focus on narratives, and to identify what is missing.

- **Active Voice Lab  -  Collaboration ecosystem of change**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Social change, USA and beyond**
A collaboration service provider that helps donors, advocates and media to work together to use story for social change. It believes change is possible when people from policy, civil society, public, private sectors and creatives come together on common objectives, describing the interdependent relationships as an "ecosystem of change".

- **SCI – Migration Learning Exchange Programme**
Thematic and geographic focus – **Immigration, USA/UK, Ireland, South Africa**
The aim of the programme is to strengthen civil society effectiveness and influence on migration issues. It works to "capture, connect, leverage and transfer" learning and expertise within and across programme countries and to share policy and advocacy insights with European CSOs. It does this by organizing international learning exchanges; supporting mentoring and coaching; encouraging collaboration among NGOs and community initiatives via convenings and meetings, and by producing shared learning materials through an information hub.
**Funded by Unbound Philanthropy and Atlantic Philanthropies**

- **Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN)- Recapturing the Human Rights Narrative Taskforce** – a online discussion group on narrative change set up following a communications thematic track at its 2018 annual conference in Mexico.

- **Global Dialogue/Hope Not Hate – Anti-Hate Table**
Thematic and geographic focus: **Racial and religious hatred/EU**
A one-year pilot civil society collaborative initiative for 2019 involving the creation of an anti-hate working group based on a US model housed at the Centre of American Progress. The group will pull together 20 key anti-hate activists, academics and influencers in five EU countries (France, Germany Italy, Poland and Sweden) The aim is to strengthen CSO collaboration to monitor, expose and counter racial and religious

hatred in Europe through a range of activities (including possibly a report) and to have a clearer understanding of the scale, nature, causes and drivers of such hate. The working group will also share strategies and devise new initiatives to mobilize their individual networks at critical moments. The first meeting is due in February 2019.
**Funding: Open Society Foundations**

- **Open Society Foundations – Internal Community of Practice on Narrative Change**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Multi-thematic, Global**
  A mapping by an internal community of practice at OSF more than a year ago revealed at least 13 different narrative initiatives spread across the thematic and geographic range of OSF's work. Programmes used different approaches and tools in their work to change narratives on LGBTQI rights, Roma, sex workers, police violence against Afro-Brazilians, race, class and migration in different countries and regions. These ranged from billboard campaigns, theatre, opera, research and virtual reality to generate empathy and awareness. The mapping also identified lessons learnt and areas for further work. This includes the need to reconnect with the public and factoring in emotion in public decision-making; more work on evaluation and measuring success, and developing more clear-cut theories on how narrative change operates at different levels.

- **Funders' Initiative for Civil Society**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic Space, Global**
  A multi-donor initiative working on different issues to better understand and define effective responses to the shrinking space for civil society through aligned support to CSOs operating under growing restrictions. The aim is to move responses beyond "coping" and strengthen the relevance and importance of civil society and human rights. FICS commissions research and develops tools and guidance to support funders to respond more strategically to closing space. It has carried out a series of analyses and co-design workshops in specific country contexts to begin identifying solutions and shared responses. Working with CSOs in the development and implementation of communications strategies and network building is increasingly identified as an important next step. Among the early outcomes are:

  a) **India – Reframing language of human rights –** In response to the difficulties of using human rights language in public discourse, some work has begun on reframing human rights around constitutional rights. Community organizing grants include some support to people at local level to understand their constitutional rights.

  b) **India – Comedy for change** – Some funders are piloting work on providing behind-the-scenes support for individual comedians who find ways to speak out in support of marginalized groups through stand-up comedy. Support can also include litigation and protection.

- **Vuka! Coalition – Positive Narrative and Campaigns Team**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Civic Space, Global**
  A civil society coalition to strengthen civic resistance to closing space and shrinking freedoms through solidarity, coordination and alignment and to "incubate new forms of organization".  One of the ways it aims to do this is by identifying, developing and supporting creative approaches to human rights advocacy, organization and operation. It

has established five action teams, one of which is on "positive narratives and campaigns" with International Service for Human Rights and Solidarity Centre chairing that team. The coalition secretariat is hosted by Civicus: World Alliance for Citizen Participation.

- **Global Centre for Pluralism** – **Global Communications Community of Practice on Migration**
  Thematic and geographic focus: **Immigration/Refugees**, **Global**
  An initiative being set up to address a glaring gap in peer learning spaces in the migration and refugee sector globally and to mobilize communications knowledge to push back rising xenophobia through positive and credible narratives on the issue. Research highlighted critical gaps in communications expertise in the sector, ways to sustain skill-building, access to research, networking and the sharing of best practices from around the world. Such a community of practice could also serve to develop movement-wide strategies for inclusive societies. An inception workshop to define the draft concept of the community of practice is to be held in Brussels in early March 2019.

# Annex 2: Strategic communications research and resources

1.  *What the Numbers Don't Tell Us - An Evaluation of Messaging and Communications Capacity in the Pro-Immigrant Movement*
Research funded by FFF in the aftermath of the Trump election to better understand what was known or unknown about public opinion and the effective use of anti-immigrant sentiment to mobilize support for him.

2.  *The Context for Communications on Migration in Europe – the Challenge of the Far Right*, the **Social Change Initiative**

3. *Toward New Gravity*  – the Narrative Initiative, Atlantic Philanthropies/Ford Foundation

*4. The Laughter Effect* – Centre for Media and Social Impact and Caty Borum Chatoo – a series of investigations on how comedy can be used for social change

5. Mapping of research and articles on the use of humour for social change, James Savage, The Fund for Global Human Rights

6. More People – Amnesty International UK Communications Strategy 2016-2020  **AI UK** has restructured its communications and rethought its approach after analysis revealed that it was unsuccessful in getting messages through to audiences it wanted to influence.

7. **ILGA Europe** toolkits on message testing and framing equality.

8. The migration narrative toolkit ICPA http://www.narrativechange.org/pedagogical-tools

9. EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) An online toolkit for public officials at local, regional and national levels in the EU on communicating on fundamental rights

10**.** Aso Communications – Messaging guides and other resources for communicating on rights, immigration, race and progressive causes by Anat Shenker-Osorio.

11. **TPI** is funding a research project by the Young Foundation on polarization as a psychological rather than political challenge. The research examines impact of the internet on how we engage and think and invite others to exchange

12. *Confessions of a framing sceptic*, Julia Unwin
https://socialcarefuture.blog/2018/06/22/confessions-of-a-framing-sceptic/

13. The **Opportunity  Agenda – Webinar** Future over fear – Pop culture strategies at your fingertips

# 1. Sharing and learning spaces

**Oak Foundation** – 7-8 March 2019. A convening hosted by Oak, OSF, FJS and GPP to use this mapping of a philanthropic response to the closing of civic space to move beyond problem-definition to collective solution-definition.

**Thomas Paine Initiative/Unbound Philanthropy and partner foundations** – May 2019, Learning exchange on the outcomes of a scoping study on strategic communications and message synergies in the human rights/social change sectors - **No cause is an island: Joining the dots between the UK's progressive strategic communications initiatives.**

This initiative explores strategic communications initiatives in the human rights/social change/broadly progressive sectors in a bid to identify what is working and synergies in messaging on commonly-held values in the UK and USA. The objective is to learn how strategic communications work can be strengthened through best practices and understanding what still needs to be done.

**EPIM –** June-September 2019, an expert roundtable is planned on the outcomes of a focused analysis of European strategic communications initiatives on migration at the EU and/or European national level. The analysis aims to identify and compare tested narratives in order to pin down those that unite and resonate among specific target audiences. It will also map non-EU or migration-related initiatives that could be inspirational for EU migration work, including evaluation efforts. The findings are expected at the end of May 2019.

Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIIF) - Cambridge Convening: Protecting Civic Space in the age of 'fake news' and 'strongman' politics, 19-20 Feb 2019

**International Civil Society Centre – [Innovators Forum 2019 – Seeking inspiration in unusual places.](#) 25-26 Feb 2019, Berlin**

# ANNEX 3: Interview list

| Name | Organization |
|---|---|
| Annmarie Benedict | The Social Change Initiative |
| Robert Bray | Neo Philanthropy |
| Neil Crowther | Thomas Paine Initiative |
| Emma Harrison | IMiX |
| Esther Hughes | Global Dialogue |
| Allison Jernow | Wellspring Philanthropic Fund |
| Anita Khashu | Four Freedoms Fund |
| Abi Knipe | Funders' Initiative for Civil Society |
| Alice Sachradja | No Cause is an Island/Unbound |
| Ayesha Saran | Barrow Cadbury Trust |
| James Savage | Fund for Global Human Rights |
| Sarah Sommer | European Programme for Integration and Migration |
| Mandy Van Deven | Foundation for a Just Society |
| Sarah Van Wettering | Open Society Foundations |
| Tim Parritt | Oak Foundation |

# ANNEX 4: Literature Review

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2. Oak Foundation Grant Recommendation Form – Global Dialogue/IMiX 2016-2017
3. Oak Foundation Grant Recommendation Form – More in Common
4. Oak Foundation Grant Recommendation Form – Migration Exchange Comms Hub and FICS, 2016-2018
5. Oak Foundation Memorandum More in Common (France), 2017
6. IHR Board Presentation, Arena, A. October 2018
7. *Case for support IMiX migration communications hub*, Harrison, E. 2018
8. Proposal Outline for AJWS/FGHR/JASS *Power Analysis Collaboration in Kenya*
9. Proposal Outline for *Civil Society Narrative Hub*, FGHR/Just Labs
10. *From 'Narrative Labs' to a 'Narrative Hub' Discussion Paper*, Just Labs/FGHR
11. *Powerful Narratives to Reopen Spaces for Civil Society*, Project Concept Note, Just Labs
12. Theory of Change: Anti-Hate Table for Europe, Pilot 2018-2019, Global Dialogue/Hope Not Hate
13. *Message Guidance: Immigration Advocacy in the Trump Area*, Lake Research Partners
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