

# The Role of Interest Groups

**Best Practices, Case Studies, and  
Lessons Learned**



Democracy for Development  
Demokraci për zhvillim  
Demokratija za razvoj



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Lessons Learned**

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## Introduction

Membership bodies are an increasing necessity in today's world. As governments get larger, they grow detached from their citizens, making it more difficult for officials to remain responsive to citizens' needs. Individual citizens often find it difficult and daunting to navigate immense government structures to effectively lobby for change by themselves. NGOs and special interest groups provide the manpower and expertise needed to make the government more receptive to their citizens. Civil society fills this gap by mobilizing citizens into large groups led by professional representatives. These individuals have the know-how to traverse layers of government more effectively than a single person could. They provide officials with constituent requests in a comprehensive, coherent format, and act as a go between for citizens and government. Moreover, as government issues become more complex, they often need policy experts to advise them on the best course of action in a particular situation. These organizations are full of individuals with expert knowledge in their fields, who can counsel leaders on the impacts of certain policy decisions. For individuals wishing to form membership groups it is important to investigate what makes particular organizations more successful than others in seeking change. This critical analysis can help when deciding what methods to adopt and which to discard to achieve success in a new organization. With that in mind the paper presents several membership groups in different environments and an analysis of what has made each prosperous.

Unfortunately, there is no culture of membership in Kosovo civil society, while special interests of small and well organized groups are able to override the public interest. As a result, Democracy for Development Institute (D4D), supported by Olof Palme International Center (OPIC,) is implementing a new initiative with the aim of encouraging MBOs creation and their involvement in decision making

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processes. The main project goal is to help membership associations become more competitive against narrow interests and become more influential in policy-making. They are being encouraged to develop pithy agendas and clear platforms to better convey their interests to political representatives.

Based on developed democracies' best practices, the first part of the paper elaborates the role of the interest groups, what makes them powerful and successful, as well as their impact. Please note that occasionally, there may be some shortened versions in order not to have repetitions.

The second part consists of three case studies from Kosovo. The first case is that of the Association of Informative Technology (STIKK), and their way toward successful advocating. The case of The Beekeepers Association 'Poleni' from Mitrovica follows, which demonstrates how they managed to increase productivity and sale of their products. And the third example, shows how Anti-Tobacco Campaign (ATC), through an intensive lobbying campaign with the Ministry of Health and members of Assembly of Kosovo, managed to ban smoking of tobacco in public places and tobacco product display.

Case studies in the third part, even though from foreign countries, share similar interests as Kosovars, and they mainly focus either on affecting legal change, buttressing passed laws, or against inaction by government bodies when those bodies already had the legal power to make change.

The case of Developing Communities Project is an example of effecting change without massive membership. Conradh na Gaelge, provides an example of a national organization lobbying at the national level and the supranational level of the EU, and last but not least, the case of the European Women's Lobby, which is the largest umbrella organization for women's rights at the EU level making it well-recognized

and well-respected

Finally, in order to further improve MBOs' efforts on addressing their issues, D4D Institute has been working on a list of members' of parliament of all legislations periods who can serve as contact points for MBOs to raise their issues on different areas. The above mentioned list can be downloaded [here](#)<sup>1</sup>.



# Desk Research

*1.1 The Role of Interest Groups*

*1.2 What makes an interest group powerful?*

*1.3 What Makes Interest Groups Successful?*

## 1.1 The Role of Interest Groups

By: R. Allen Hays. Translated and shortened version<sup>2</sup>

Interest groups are one important mechanism through which citizens in the United States make their ideas, needs, and views known to elected officials. Citizens can usually find an interest group that focuses on their concerns, no matter how specialized they may be. Directories of American voluntary associations reveal the incredible variety of reasons why citizens band together. The Gale Research, Inc., *Encyclopedia of Associations* is widely regarded as one of the most comprehensive lists. Not all of these groups are politically active, but a great many try to influence public policy.

Both the formal structure and the informal traditions of American politics provide fertile ground for interest groups. One feature of the American system that enhances their influence is the relative weakness of U.S. political parties, which stems, in part, from the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches. In a parliamentary system such as Great Britain, where the prime minister's hold on office depends on majority support in Parliament, parties exert considerable control over legislators and, as a consequence, over policy making. In contrast, elections of the U.S. president and Congress are politically separate events, even when held at the same time. Each legislator must construct a winning coalition in his or her state or district, and the nature of these coalitions is quite different from the majority coalition that the successful presidential candidate assembles. Clear evidence for this is the fact that Congress and the presidency have been in the control of opposing parties most of the time since World War II. As a consequence, neither Democrats nor Republicans are invariably bound to support the positions of their party's president or their party's electoral platform. Weak party loyalty enhances interest-group influence, both during

elections, when their financial support can be critical, and afterwards, when groups that supported the winning candidate become closely involved in policy making.

A second feature of the system that encourages interest groups is the decentralization of political power to states and localities, known as the federal system, or "federalism." Citizen associations often get started at the state and local levels, later combining into national organizations. Decentralization thus encourages a greater variety of interest groups. It also further weakens the party system, because the social and economic diversity of the 50 states make strict party discipline difficult.

In addition, a strong, independent judiciary in the American system enhances the power of interest groups. U.S. courts often rule on issues that, in other democratic polities, would be under the control of the legislature or bureaucracy. Thus, interest groups can utilize litigation to achieve policy objectives that they cannot obtain through legislative action. For example, in the early 1950s, court victories by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) created the first cracks in American racial segregation, years before a Congress dominated by Southerners in key positions was willing to act.

Finally, the American tradition of virtually unlimited freedom of speech, press, and assembly means that nearly any point of view expressed by an interest group, no matter how radical, is permitted a public airing. To be sure, the increasing centralization of the media since World War II has made it more difficult for groups with fringe views to gain a serious hearing. However, this centralizing trend has been partially counteracted by the open access granted to groups on the Internet. On the whole, the American free speech and free press traditions, which offer numerous opportunities to publicize societal problems and lay out positions on public policy, encourage group formation.

## *The universe of interest groups*

Before 1970, the typical American textbook on interest groups devoted most of its pages to three categories: business, labor, and agriculture. Since then, the interest-group universe has become much more complicated. Agricultural groups have lost influence due to the declining number of farmers in the United States. In addition, many new groups that fit none of these categories have emerged.

### *Business*

Most scholars would agree that business plays a central role in American politics. Major corporations carry the prestige of being important players in the U.S. economy. Because elected officials are held accountable for the nation's economic performance, they often fear anti-business policies will harm that performance.

Yet, business also utilizes direct levers of influence. Large multinational corporations bring vast resources to bear on their political goals. They are usually members of multiple trade associations, which represent an entire industry's views in the political process. Corporations also support "umbrella" groups, such as the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, that speak for the whole business community. Finally, individual companies directly lobby legislators, and they funnel millions of dollars in campaign contributions to the candidates they favor.

### *Labor unions*

Labor unions grew slowly in the early part of the 20th century, but they gained a significant place in the American political system in the 1930s. The National Labor Relations Act protected collective bargaining and enabled unions to grow much faster. They reached a peak membership of 35 percent of the labor force in the 1950s. However, in the 1960s, union membership began to decline toward its current level of approximately 15 percent of the working population, and

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the political power of unions declined along with their economic power. The reasons for this decline in union membership, too complex to discuss in detail here, lie in the changing nature of the global economy, and the shift in the United States from a manufacturing-based economy to one more service-oriented. Unions, however, still exert considerable clout when they focus their energies on an election or an issue.

### *Professional associations*

Another important type of interest group is the association of professionals. Groups like the American Medical Association<sup>3</sup> and the American Bar Association focus on the collective interests, values, and status of their profession. Less powerful, but nonetheless well organized, are professionals in the public sector. Virtually every specialty within state and local governments has its own national organization. In housing policy, for example, groups include the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, the National Council of State Housing Agencies, and the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities. Such groups are restricted from partisan activities by state and federal laws. However, they testify before Congress on issues affecting their programs, and they organize their members to speak with representatives from their own states or districts. Since low-income clients of public programs rarely organize themselves into interest groups that are influential at the national level, these associations of service providers are an important voice for the poor in the American political process.

### *Intergovernmental groups*

A related category consists of interest groups representing units of state and local government, lobbying for their interests on the national level. While these groups have no official role in the U.S. federal system that divides authority among national, state, and local governments, they function much as other interest groups do. That is, they present the views of their members to Congress and the administration and make the case for their positions in the media. The National Governors' Association (NGA)<sup>4</sup> and the National Conference of State Legislatures represent state officials, for example. Since state governors have direct administrative and political responsibility for carrying out social welfare programs mandated by the federal government, the NGA in particular has been influential in helping members of Congress draft social welfare legislation. The general institutional interests of counties are represented by the National Association of Counties, and those of cities by the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

### *Public interest groups*

The type of interest group experiencing the most rapid growth since 1970 is the "public interest group." Political scientist Jeffrey Berry defines a public interest group as one that supports goals that are not of direct material benefit to its members but rather express their values pertaining to society as a whole. The first public interest groups were spawned by the civil rights, women's rights, and environmental movements of the 1960s. Supporters of these causes often went through an evolution over time that transferred the expression of their views from street protest to organized action within the political system. Later, public interest groups mobilized on new issues, such as the rights of the disabled, prevention of child abuse or domestic violence, and gay/lesbian rights. These groups have also been major advocates for programs benefiting the poor. Some leading

groups of this type include the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the Children's Defense Fund, and Public Citizen (the group led by consumer activist Ralph Nader).

Public interest groups generally lack the financial resources of business groups. While the issues they champion often enjoy considerable public support according to opinion polls, few have mass memberships. One reason for this is that the intangible nature of their goals contributes to the "free rider" problem -- that is, an individual can benefit from an interest group's efforts without being a member, or at least without being heavily involved. Nevertheless, they use their expertise and information-gathering efforts to raise issues that no other groups are addressing. Initially, most public interest groups were on the left of the political spectrum. However, in recent years conservatives have organized their own groups, largely in response to the perceived liberal shift of public policy in the 1960s and 1970s. Among leading public interest groups in this category are the National Taxpayer's Union and Concerned Women for America. Conservative think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation may also function as interest groups, as their research tends to support the conservative world-view. The same could, perhaps, be said about the Urban Institute on the liberal side.

These domestic public interest groups resemble the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that have sprung up on the international scene since the 1980s. In fact, some American groups have close ties with international NGOs. In both cases, support comes from citizens concerned about a general social issue, rather than immediate economic interests.

### *Limits on interest-group effectiveness*

As this brief survey suggests, there are a great variety of interest groups on the American political scene; a large body of research indicates that their effectiveness in making the

views of their members heard varies considerably. The reasons for this disparity lie in how a group employs its chief political resources: membership, cohesion/intensity, money, and information.

### **Number and cohesion of members**

It would seem logical to assume that interest groups with a large base of support in the population would be the most influential. Elected officials champion the policies advocated by significant majorities in opinion polling, because they want to add the large number of potential voters supporting these positions to their winning coalitions. However, several factors complicate this picture.

It is true that millions of citizens belong to interest groups and that some, such as the environmentalist Sierra Club and the AFL/CIO, the labor organization, are quite large. However, a closer look shows that most mass-membership groups enroll only a small fraction of their potential supporters. For example, polls show substantial majorities of Americans in favor of strong environmental regulations. These supporters constitute a pool of millions of potential members for environmental interest groups. However, even the largest environmental groups claim memberships of under one million. This relatively small number of members is in keeping with the overall principle that the number of citizens who join interest groups is a small fraction of the U.S. population.

The late economist Mancur Olson advanced the most plausible explanation for this phenomenon. He argued that the achievement of a policy goal by an interest group is, in economic terms, a "public good." That is, the benefits of a group's success are enjoyed by those who agree with a group's position, whether or not they actually join the group. Thus, if whales are saved from extinction, one can derive satisfaction from their existence, even if one never paid dues to a "save the whales" interest group. It is true, of course, that if no one



contributes, the group won't exist. However, in large groups the marginal contribution of each new member is small. Therefore, while thousands of supporters will join, many others will not join the group or make a full commitment; they will become "free riders", i.e., enjoying the benefits while others actively participate and pay.

Another serious problem faced by a mass-membership group is translating citizen support for the group into votes for candidates that support its goals. Voting is a complex act, involving multiple motivations and influences: the candidate's personality, party loyalty, and a range of issues. Voting studies show that many voters are not fully aware of the policy positions taken by candidates they support.

As a result, it is often difficult for a group to show that the voting choices of its supporters are primarily motivated by its particular issues. Groups that can convince candidates of their voting power become feared and respected. For example, the National Rifle Association (NRA), which opposes gun control laws, has convinced legislators that its members will vote for or against them solely on this issue. Therefore, the NRA wields influence far out of proportion to its numbers, even though most Americans favor stronger gun control laws.

Because of the difficulties of mobilizing mass memberships, it is not surprising that smaller cohesive groups with more intensity of feeling often exercise influence far greater than their numbers might suggest. First, the smaller the group, the larger the marginal contribution of each member, so that "free riders" are reduced. Secondly, until the advent of the Internet, communication among members was much easier in smaller groups, thus making mobilization much easier. If these advantages of smaller size are reinforced by its members having a large stake in policy outcomes, then even a small group may become very powerful.

## Money

The importance of money in American politics has increased in recent years, due to the escalating costs of political campaigns. Existing laws limiting campaign contributions have gaps in them, and, many elected officials from both parties are reluctant to support changes in the current system that might give some advantage to their opponents. Interest groups that are most influential in national elections generally make voluntary contributions to candidates totaling in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In addition, considerable financial resources are needed to maintain a presence in Washington between elections. A group needs a professional staff to influence legislation affecting its interests, in addition to the staff needed to communicate with its members and to offer them services. Groups without a steady Washington presence cannot exert the behind-the-scenes influence on the details of legislation that is the hallmark of a successful interest group.

Money also interacts with the factors of membership and cohesion. In order to overcome the free rider problem, groups must attract "policy entrepreneurs" -- that is, individuals who seek material, professional, or ideological rewards from organizing a successful group. To do so, the group's potential membership must have sufficient surplus resources to provide a promising organizational base. This need for a surplus creates an income floor, below which potential groups are unlikely to be organized.

For this reason, relatively few groups directly represent the poor. Above this floor, however, the role of resources becomes more complex. In the abstract, one might argue that a group with 1,000,000 members who each contribute \$5 could raise as much money (\$5,000,000) as a group with 10,000 members who can contribute \$500 each. It is only when one considers the free rider problem, plus the high costs of communicating with a large membership, that the true

disadvantage of the larger group becomes apparent.

Another factor affecting a group's mobilization of resources is whether its membership consists of individual citizens or of other organizations. Many powerful interest groups are, in fact, organizations of organizations. This includes trade associations, professional associations, and groups representing public and nonprofit service providers. A group composed of other organizations has fewer entities to mobilize, yet it can still claim to represent the thousands of people affiliated with those entities. In addition, its members can use organizational resources, rather than personal financial resources, to support it.

## **Information**

Next to a committed membership and money, information is the most powerful resource that an interest group can possess. Information is exchanged in several ways. First, information passes from interest groups to decision-makers. Groups often have technical knowledge that legislators lack, and they are eager to educate lawmakers on the issues they care about. It's true that the information they provide generally comes with a bias that reinforces the group's interests. Legislators are well aware of the bias, but may still find this information useful. One of the main advantages of a continuous presence in Washington is the opportunity to provide information to lawmakers at key points in the decision-making process.

Second, information flows from the legislative and executive branches to interest groups. Their staffers track legislative proposals, thus becoming aware of the most propitious times to try to influence the legislative process. Their informal contacts with congressional staff provide opportunities to testify at hearings and to mobilize their group's members when a crucial vote is near. Through this process, they learn which actors are most powerful and what strategies will gain

their support. On occasion, they can obtain a modification to the detailed language of a bill in Congress that will affect its impact.

Finally, interest groups exchange information with members and with other citizens. They may conduct an investigation or commission a study that dramatizes a problem. If they attract sufficient media attention, legislators feel pressure to respond. They also solicit information from their members, and inform them about upcoming decisions. On most legislation, only a small number of private citizens contact their legislators. Therefore, 200 letters orchestrated by a group can seem like a blizzard of mail. The rapid growth of the Internet during the last five years has radically reduced the cost of communication among large numbers of citizens. Most interest groups now have Web pages, and many use e-mail both to communicate with members and as a means for their members to communicate with decision-makers. However, the medium is so new that groups are still learning how best to utilize it, and it is too early to tell exactly how much influence it will have on the process of interest-group influence.

One recent example of such influence was the use of certain conservative Web sites to circulate negative information about former President Bill Clinton, some of it accurate and some of it grossly distorted or fabricated. This probably helped keep the momentum for Clinton's impeachment going, although a majority of Americans still opposed it. Unless large economic actors figure out a way to control Internet access, and thus increase its cost, the new medium is likely to have a democratizing influence on political dialogue. Conversely, it is possible that the Internet may also encourage the fragmentation of citizens into small, electronically linked groups who isolate themselves within increasingly bizarre world views.

### *Toward more effective public interest groups*

For these reasons the preferences of smaller, more cohesive, better financed groups win out, more often than not, over the preferences of groups representing larger numbers of citizens. And particularistic interests frequently prevail over the more general interests of what one might call the larger public. The proliferation of public interest groups in recent years does, however, make the interest-group system as a whole more representative of the diversity of opinions among Americans. And public interest groups are often able to score victories over seemingly more powerful, better-financed opponents. At the end of the day, though, elected officials know that it takes money to win votes. Many times mass-based interest groups cannot reliably deliver the votes of their members, but trade associations and individual corporations can reliably deliver the dollars that candidates need to buy television advertising.

A crucial missing element in many public interest groups is the lack of genuine grassroots political organization. These groups typically consist of a small staff, supported by thousands of members whose only link to the group is periodic financial contributions. This structure is in contrast to earlier forms of mass political organization, in which national movements were built from smaller, face-to-face local organizations. With the exception of a small number of activists, members of modern groups rarely meet face to face. Recent observers of American society have become increasingly concerned with a decline in community involvement by citizens.

This decline applies to nonpolitical, as well as political organizations. Many causes have been advanced for this phenomenon: the isolating effects of television; the increase in dual-career and single-parent families where adults have little leisure time; and the cynicism generated by media-dominated campaigns that focus on personalities and

scandals, rather than meaningful issues.

Whatever the causes of this decline, an interest group that could effectively mobilize people through local, grassroots chapters would be in a powerful position politically. It would develop a steady membership base that would be less expensive to reach because of established channels of communication. By supplementing national lobbying with direct local contacts with candidates and office holders, it could convincingly argue that its members will vote based on group issues. It would truly be a mass movement, rather than a small elite, funded by passive supporters.

However, the obstacles to creating such a group are formidable. A large initial infusion of money would be necessary to support local organizing campaigns. It would also have to overcome the American tendency to separate local from national issues. Finally, many citizens would have to be wooed from their tendency to focus on issues raised by the national media at the expense of face-to-face exchange with their neighbors.

A hallmark of a democratic society is that it allows citizens to create alternative political resources that they can mobilize when they believe private economic actors or government officials violate their interests. In that sense, organized interest groups play a fundamental role; they help citizens more effectively utilize the resources they have: voting, free speech, assembly, and the judicial process.

## 1.2 What makes an interest group powerful?

By: Emily Linden. [Translated and shortened version](#)<sup>5</sup>.

Interest groups serve to link the public with the government. It is a way for society to voice opinion on a specific subject as a united front. Unlike political parties, interest groups have a specific focus and mission. These groups may also vary in how much influence they are able to exert.

Some groups have more success at achieving their goals than others. More often than not, it has nothing to do with the actual relevancy of the cause. There are numerous causes in which people place their hearts and souls, along with time and money; that still fail to garner attention. “Some interests systematically lose in the policy process; others habitually win. One can make the strong case that those interests with resources such as money, access, and information will usually obtain better results than those that possess few assets and employ them less effectively” (Cigler and Loomis 4).

However, I believe that the single most important determinant of an interest group’s success is access to government and policy makers. Access precedes influence. That is to say, before policy change can be implemented, access to important political figures must be obtained. It cannot be said enough: no matter how much money a group has, or how powerful/legitimate their message is, without access to those that actually have the power to change policy, their work is for naught.

Access itself can be obtained through a number of factors. These include funding, personal connections, group structure, legitimacy of the membership and relevancy of the group at the time. All of these factors may be used in conjunction to gain access to policy makers.

Funding can be used to purchase access in a number of ways. First of all, it can be used to buy air time on media outlets.

“Press, radio and television provide an additional resource for interest groups. By definition, messages through the media address a popular audience rather than specific decision makers. Thus the media are a central focus for promotional groups seeking to steer public opinion. Their target is society as much as government” (Hague and Harrop 171). If a certain issue is getting lots of publicity, it may be impossible for politicians to ignore without repercussions.

Monetary contributions to candidates and parties themselves may also play a role. One example is Richard T. Farmer, whose family controls Cintas Corporation. He has been quoted as saying, “If you think I’m giving money to get access to [President Bush] you’re crazy. I’m just trying to get the right guy elected. That’s all I care about” (Grimaldi and Edsall 1). It is ironic, however, that lobbyists in Farmer’s industry were given an advance copy of environmental legislation, which they were allowed to edit, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) then adopted. In other words, Farmer was able to use his wealth to gain access to the policy makers in order to sway legislation in his favor.

Access is also gained through personal connections. Although connections may not always lead to achievement of goals, they can be used as a way for a group to get their foot into the door. Politicians are more likely to grant time to those with whom they have a personal relationship and ostensibly, similar political views. Increasingly, interest groups will hire lobbyists who have personal connections to the politicians the group is trying to influence. “The business of lobbying remains highly personal. A legislator is most likely to return a call from a lobbyist if the caller is a former colleague” (Hague and Harrop 171). The connections may also be seen inside the government itself. An example is the recent EPA air pollution regulation. “The regulation was ushered through the agency by senior officials with previous ties to the timber and chemical industries” (Miller and Hamburger 1). The resulting legislation of course benefited none other than the



industries themselves (rather than the environment).

Another factor is how legitimate the interest group is. This legitimacy may be in turn influenced by the type of members. “Interests enjoying high prestige are most likely to prevail on certain issues” (Hague and Harrop 175). The example given was of blue collar unions versus higher prestige jobs like doctors and lawyers. It seems like the general public trend is to give those in jobs of “higher prestige” more access. This makes sense because “high prestige” qualities (such as a larger salary, higher education, etc.) may contribute to a group’s funding, connections, etc. Those with more money often can and will donate more, and with better education often come access to a larger circle of influential people.

The composition of an interest group’s membership may determine access. Are these members large donors to the cause or are they free-riders reaping all of the benefits? “Groups can overcome the free-rider problem by finding a sponsor who will support the organization and reduce its reliance upon membership contributions” (Cigler and Loomis 23). The number of members also has a major impact upon the amount of access that an interest group can garner.

Although a large size can be detrimental at times, as large numbers can dilute the message and clog the organization with bureaucratic red tape, overall large numbers are helpful in gaining access. There are more people to spread an interest group’s particular message, more people to contribute funds, and it can be harder for politicians to ignore a sizeable group of people. When a sizeable portion of his or her constituency feels a certain way, a politician may feel a moral obligation and duty to promote the cause of a group. There is also the legitimate threat of not being re-elected that may spur a politician into action. The threat of failing to secure re-election is also useful when a large group of constituents in an interest group lobbies a politician.

However, the message can be ignored if it is not relevant or feasible at the time. “Groups organize politically when the existing order is disturbed and certain interests are, in turn, helped or hurt” (Cigler and Loomis 7). For example, after *Roe v. Wade* was decided, interest groups pushing for legalized abortion lost their relevance. Why fight for a cause that was now seemingly unthreatened? But because abortion is becoming a contentious issue again (many fear the threat of retiring Supreme Court justices during the Bush administration may lead to the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*) pro-choice interest groups may strengthen and spring up again. “Groups formed from an imbalance of interests in one area induce a subsequent disequilibrium, which acts as a catalyst for individuals to form groups as counterweights to the new perceptions of inequity” (Cigler and Loomis 7).

Groups may rise and fall in relevance over time, but whether or not their message is heard and answered, depends upon the access they have to the policy makers themselves. The same can be said of a group’s size, composition and funding. Without access, all of those qualities are irrelevant. Politics continues to be dominated by those well connected to the policy makers.

To sum it up, the problem of contemporary interest group politics is one of access. “For particular interests, especially those that are well defined and adequately funded, the government is responsive to the issues of their greatest concern” (Cigler and Loomis 28). For others, no matter the importance of the message or the fervor of the members, they will continue to crusade unheard.

## 1.3 What Makes Interest Groups Successful?

Below you may read about interest groups, with a focus on key elements of successful ones.<sup>6</sup>

### *Members*

Members join interest groups because of common concerns and to unite under one cause<sup>7</sup>.

### **Terms**

- Incentive - Something that motivates, rouses, or encourages.
- Interest group - Collections of members with shared knowledge, status, or goals. In many cases, these groups advocate for particular political or social issues.
- Solidary - Having shared community interests and responsibilities.

An interest group is a group of individuals who share common objectives, and whose aim is to influence policymakers. Institutional interest groups represent other organizations, with agendas that fit the needs of the organizations they serve. Examples include the American Cotton Manufacturers (which represents the generally congruous southern textile mills) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (which represents the multitude of wants of American businesses).

Membership interest groups are organizations that represent individuals for social, business, labor, or charitable purposes in order to achieve civil or political goals. Examples include the NAACP (African-American interests), the Sierra Club (environmental interests), the NRA (Second Amendment interests) , and Common Cause (interests in an increase in voter turnout and knowledge). Membership includes a group

of people that join an interest group and unite under one cause. Members may or may not have an opinion on some of the issues the staff pursues. Similarly, staff are the leaders. With the membership united under one cause, the staff has the ability to pursue other issues that the membership may disagree on because members will remain in the group because they are united by the primary cause.

### **Benefits and Incentives**

A general theory is that individuals must be enticed with some type of benefit to join an interest group. Known as the free rider problem, it refers to the difficulty of obtaining members when the benefits are reaped without membership. For instance, an interest group dedicated to improving farming standards will fight for the general goal of improving farming for all farmers, even those who are not members of the particular interest group. Thus, there is no real incentive to join an interest group and pay dues if the farmer will still receive that benefit even if they do not become a member. Interest groups must receive dues and contributions from members in order to accomplish their agendas. While every individual in the world would benefit from a cleaner environment, an environmental protection interest group does not, in turn, receive financial help from every individual in the world.

Selective material benefits are sometimes given in order to address the free rider problem. Interest groups give material benefits like travel discounts, free meals at certain restaurants, or free subscriptions to magazines, newspapers, or journals. Many trade and professional interest groups give these benefits to members.

A selective solidary benefit is another type of benefit offered to members of an interest group. These incentives involve benefits like socializing, congeniality, the sense of group membership and identification, the status resulting from membership, fun and conviviality, the maintenance of social

distinctions, and so on. A solidary incentive is one in which the rewards for participation are social and created out of the act of association.

An expressive incentive can be another basic benefit to members of an interest group. People who join an interest group because of expressive benefits join to express an ideological or moral value they believe in. Such values include free speech, civil rights, economic justice, or political equality. To obtain these types of benefits, members simply pay dues or donate time or money to get a feeling of satisfaction from expressing a political value. Even if the interest group does not achieve its goals, members merely want to be able to say they helped out in the process of trying to obtain the goals, which is the expressive incentive. Interest groups that rely on expressive benefits include environmental groups and groups who claim to lobby for the public interest.

### **Collective Action**

Mancur Lloyd Olson, a leading American economist, sought to understand the logical basis of interest group membership and participation. The reigning political theories of his day granted groups an almost primordial status. Some appealed to a natural human instinct for herding, others ascribed the formation of groups to kinship rooted in the process of modernization. Olson offered a radically different account of the logical basis of organized collective action. In his first book, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (1965), he theorized that "only a separate and 'selective' incentive will stimulate a rational individual in a latent group to act in a group-oriented way." Olsen's work laid the foundation for understanding how members of a large group will not act in the group's common interest unless motivated by personal gains.

## *Size and Resources*

Interest groups, comprised of members with shared knowledge, status, or goals, frequently advocate on behalf of particular political issues<sup>8</sup>.

### **Terms**

- Media campaign - An attempt to influence public opinion using television, radio, internet, and print advertisements.
- Interest group - Collections of members with shared knowledge, status, or goals. In many cases, these groups advocate for particular political or social issues.
- Lobbying - Lobbying (also lobby) is the act of attempting to influence decisions made by officials in the government, most often legislators or members of regulatory agencies.

Interest groups are comprised of individuals with shared knowledge, status, or goals, and in many cases these groups advocate for particular political or social issues. In the United States, interest groups are often associated with lobbying groups, who seek to influence government officials to act favorably towards them. Interest groups, however, are not always involved in lobbying. They may not be politically active, or else they may use indirect tactics such as media campaigns, research, and public opinion polls in order to advance their cause.

Interest groups that are politically active with regards to one or more issues are called advocacy groups. In liberal democracies, advocacy groups tend to treat bureaucracy as their main channel of influence, because that is where the decision-making power lies. The aim of advocacy groups is to influence a member of the legislature to support their cause by voting a certain way. The practice of attempting to influence lawmakers is called lobbying, and the effectiveness of a group's lobbying efforts is usually tied to its access to resources (almost always financial).

## **Interest Groups and Resources**

Interest groups may gain influence because of their access to money. Indeed, financial resources are often critical in influencing governmental policy. In some cases, money is used directly to influence politicians — for example, a lobbyist may treat a legislator to an expensive dinner. These instances are almost always considered corrupt, and are often outlawed as bribery. Money can also be used in more subtle ways to pressure lawmakers into voting in a particular way. For example, because they play a large role in the national economy, large corporations have an advantage in influencing lawmakers. If these large corporations were to suddenly become less successful, it might create economic trouble, which could turn public opinion against elected officials. Thus, the wealthier a corporation is, the more political clout it tends to have. Likewise, large corporations have greater access to politicians than other groups, because corporate leaders often have insider status in powerful groups. Moreover, an interest group might also make use of financial resources in order to donate to a political campaign. In this instance, the donation is not explicitly tied to a policy vote, and is therefore a legal contribution. That being said, the expectation is that interest groups will use their wealth to elect candidates that support their issues. In all of these ways, interest groups use money to gain success and influence on many levels.

## **Issue Campaigns**

Apart from using money to directly influence bureaucrats, interest groups may also use their wealth to launch issue campaigns. In this case, organizations try to gain popular support among American voters for a particular issue. Ultimately, the goal of this tactic is to pressure legislators into acting a certain way in response to a perceived public mandate. Since legislators are elected, there is a strong incentive for them to vote for issues that are popular with the

current public opinion. Media campaigns can be very effective at marshaling public opinion, but they are very expensive, because campaigns need to buy television and radio air time, as well as print advertisements. Money is also required to hire and fund the professionals who will run these campaigns. Thus, interest groups with greater funds are far more likely to successfully influence policy than those groups with fewer financial resources.

### **Size of Interest Groups**

As organizations attempting to influence politics through public opinion, interest groups with larger memberships have an advantage over smaller ones. Since legislators are accountable to voters, the more public support there is for an issue, the more likely it is to receive support and governmental attention. Larger interest groups necessarily have influence because of how many voters participate in them. They are also effective because the core group membership is able to more effectively campaign on behalf of an issue than a group with a smaller membership. Additionally, larger interest groups are able to stage large demonstrations that make visible the widespread support for an issue.

### *Cohesiveness*

Advocacy groups that form along ideological, ethnic, or foreign policy objectives tend to have higher levels of internal cohesion<sup>9</sup>.

### **Terms**

- Groupthink - A process of reasoning or decision-making by a group, especially one characterized by uncritical acceptance or conformity to a perceived majority view.
- Social cohesion - The bonds or "glue" that maintain stability in society.



- Ethnic interest group - An ethnic interest group, according to the political scientist Thomas Ambrosio, is an advocacy group established along cultural, ethnic, religious or racial lines by an ethnic group for the purposes of directly or indirectly influencing the foreign policy of their resident country in support of the homeland and/or ethnic kin abroad with which they identify.

In the social sciences a social group has been defined as two or more humans who interact with one another, share similar characteristics, and collectively have a sense of unity. Other theorists, however, are a wary of definitions which stress the importance of interdependence or objective similarity. Instead, for researchers in the social identity tradition, "a group is defined in terms of those who identify themselves as members of the group". Regardless, social groups come in a myriad of sizes and varieties.

A social group exhibits some degree of social cohesion and is more than a simple collection or aggregate of individuals, such as people waiting at a bus stop or people waiting in a line. Characteristics shared by members of a group may include interests, values, representations, ethnic or social background, and kinship ties. Kinship ties being a social bond based on common ancestry, marriage, or adoption. In a similar vein, some researchers consider the defining characteristic of a group as social interaction.

### *Advocacy Groups*

Advocacy groups use various forms of advocacy to influence public opinion and/or policy; they have played and continue to play an important part in the development of political and social systems. Groups vary considerably in size, influence, and motive; some have wide-ranging, long-term social purposes, others are focused and are a response to an immediate issue or concern. Motives for action may be based

on a shared political, faith, moral, or commercial position. Groups use varied methods to try to achieve their aims including lobbying, media campaigns, publicity stunts, polls, research, and policy briefings. Some groups are supported by powerful business or political interests and exert considerable influence on the political process, others have few such resources.

An ethnic interest group, according to the political scientist Thomas Ambrosio, is an advocacy group established along cultural, ethnic, religious, or racial lines by an ethnic group for the purposes of directly or indirectly influencing the foreign policy of their resident country in support of the homeland and/or ethnic kin abroad with which they identify. According to Ambrosio, "like other societal interest groups, ethnic identity groups establish formal organizations devoted to promoting group cohesiveness and addressing group concerns." While many formal organizations, established by ethnic identity groups, are apolitical, others are created explicitly for political purposes. In general, groups who seek to influence government policy on domestic or foreign issues are referred to as "advocacy groups." Those interest groups, established by ethnic identity groups, are referred to as ethnic interest groups. The American Israeli Public Affairs Committee is an example of an ethnic interest group in the United States - its mission is to influence American foreign policy and maintain a robust alliance with Israel.

### *Groupthink*

Groupthink is a psychological phenomenon that occurs within groups of people, in which the desire for harmony in a decision-making group overrides a realistic appraisal of alternatives. Group members try to minimize conflict and reach a consensus decision without critical evaluation of alternative ideas or viewpoints. Antecedent factors, such as group cohesiveness, structural faults, and situational context, play into the likelihood of whether or not groupthink will

impact the decision-making process.

Deindividuation is a concept in social psychology that is generally thought of as the loosening of self-awareness in groups, although this is a matter of contention. Sociologists also study the phenomenon of deindividuation, but the level of analysis is somewhat different. For the social psychologist, the level of analysis is the individual in the context of a social situation. As such, social psychologists emphasize the role of internal psychological processes. Other social sciences, such as sociology, are more concerned with broad social, economic, political, and historical factors that influence events in a given society.

### *Leadership*

Interest groups often rely on leaders to organize their fundraising and make their advocacy efforts successful<sup>10</sup>.

### **Terms**

- Lobbyist - A person remunerated to persuade (to lobby) politicians to vote in a certain way or otherwise use their office to effect a desired result.
- Political strategist - A consultant who advises and assists political campaigns.
- Social movement - A large, informal grouping of individuals or organizations which advocates for specific political or social issues.

The role of leadership varies based on the political orientation or goals of an interest group. Some interest groups, especially corporations, hire lobbyists to lead their advocacy efforts. Interest groups with organized media campaigns may be led by political strategists. In contrast, more amorphous social movements that act as interest groups may coalesce around charismatic, but often unofficial, group leaders.

When interest groups attempt to influence policymakers through lobbying, they usually rely on professional lobbyists. Lobbyists are often well-connected professionals, such as lawyers, whose role is to argue for specific legislation. Successful lobbyists achieve insider status in legislative bodies, meaning they can talk directly to lawmakers. Once they gain access to legislators, the lobbyist's job is to persuade them to act on behalf of their client. Recent estimates put the number of registered lobbyists in Washington, D.C. at about 13,700, though there are likely thousands more unregistered lobbyists working to influence policymakers.

Interest groups that attempt to influence policy by changing public opinion may be led by political strategists, who are often consultants familiar with public relations, advertising, and the political process. Political strategists are responsible for determining a campaign plan. The campaign plan usually involves deciding on a central message the interest group hopes to use for persuading voters to support their position. Additionally, the strategist determines where advertisements will be placed, where grassroots organizing efforts will be focused, and how fundraising will be structured. In issue-based campaigns, successful political strategists create public awareness and support for an issue, which can then pressure legislators to act in favor of the interest group.

Interest groups may be broader than one formal organization, in which case advocacy may form a social movement. A social movement is group action aimed at social change. Social movements may have some formal hierarchy, but they are often disorganized, with funding and support coming from a range of decentralized sources. Because of these factors, social movements do not always have a clear leader the way corporate lobbying efforts and media campaigns do. Instead, social movements may either rely on a network of local leaders, or may be led informally by a charismatic or influential participant. For example, the Civil Rights Movement was a diffuse and widespread effort toward social

change, involving many formal organizations and informal groups. Still, many consider Martin Luther King, Jr. to be the leader of the Civil Rights Movement because of the highly influential and public role he played in influencing policies and opinions. Interest groups with a de facto leader may be more successful at sustained political advocacy than those with no clear hierarchy, because a clearly defined leader allows for more efficient organization of fundraising efforts, demonstrations, and campaigns. That being said, social scientists often disagree when defining social movements and the most effective forms of advocacy, finding that leadership plays an ambiguous role in terms of the overall success of many interest groups.

# Case Studies from Kosovo

- 2.1 *“If you want to push something forward, get ready!”  
Case study of advocacy by the Association of Informative  
Technology (STIKK)*
- 2.2 *Beekeepers for Common Interest*
- 2.3 *How to defend the public interest with little popular  
support? Lessons learned from the anti-tobacco  
campaign*

## 2.1 “If you want to push something forward, get ready!” Case study of advocacy by the Association of Informative Technology (STIKK)

STIKK<sup>11</sup> is a successful association in the IT sector, which has managed to gather many companies, professionals and students from the related field to work on strengthening capacities in the sector and to advocate for its profit.

One of the reasons why STIKK activities are effective, is the well-organized work in this association. This enables the association to produce definite results, to build trust from the members, and to leave a good impression when cooperating with international partners, including donors, whose support is decisive to the function of STIKK in the current level of capacities.

STIKK produces researches and studies on the related sector and issues of interest, therefore, has got strong and fact-based opinions. Its approach based on arguments has made STIKK a valuable partner for public institutions throughout the making of policies and decisions.

The main advocating accomplishment of STIKK was the addition of some IT products in the list of the goods exempt from customs tax, in an implemented law from the Kosovo Assembly in 2014. STIKK has created this opportunity by offering fact-based arguments and by giving proof from the experience of foreign countries. It was accentuated that the state would be first to benefit by this step, and the budget would multiply.

STIKK experience illustrates that successful advocating for an issue, requires to address the parties of interest clearly, to understand their motivations and to create wide-ranging coalitions. In the case of customs taxes, STIKK has worked

systematically, by finding political support from the Government, cooperating with other business associations, as well as by lobbying to all the parties that would have an impact to the process.

The example of this collaboration between STIKK and State Institutions shows that the advocating approach of an interest group should be very constructive and radical measures such as protests or public conflicts should be left only as the last practice on the list of options. Furthermore, it is very important that the issue for which the party is advocating, should be framed in that way to emphasize the general social benefit, never the benefit of specific individuals or companies.

### *What is STIKK and what does it do?*

Kosovo Association for Information Technology and Communication (STIKK) was established in 2008 as an initiative of entrepreneurs of this sector. This came to life with the crucial support of donors such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway, Association for Technology and Information in Norway and Crimson Capital. These joint companies became one association only with precise identification of common interests. The founders were convinced that the association could make an impact on state policies. Another agreeable element was the opportunity to build capacities by working on projects and intercommunicating with commercial partners from abroad.

Donors played a key role to developing STIKK. Without their support, it would be difficult for the IT companies to come together. The motivation provided by the Norwegians to support STIKK gave a great example of a work towards development, where industrial organisations were key partners of the Government in policy making. The fact that the lack of organization and cooperation between professionals and companies of the private sector was considered as troublesome for the industrial and social



development, was another great motivation. In addition, the IT sector was recognized as a sector which had potential to be advanced in Kosovo.

Today, STIKK has 126 members of different categories (membership packages) who benefit from different levels of services from the association. Types of the membership are: full member (61) and co-operative member: educational institutions (7), IT professional (17) and student (48)

Only companies and industry associations can be full members. They are divided in five sub-categories: Start-up, ordinary, silvered, bronze and golden. While all full members have equal rights in STIKK Assembly, the only difference is the level of benefits they get from the networking activities, b2b meetings, information shared or trainings. Other membership categories – students and IT professionals – benefit from networking, trainings and information sharing, but they are not part of decision-making structures of STIKK.

STIKK members pay regular dues, which help financing the associate and raise the sense of ownership and accountability in it. The annual fee for full members starts from €80 (start-up) to €2.500 (golden member). Students pay €10 and IT professionals €30. The vast amount of STIKK assets is provided by its donors. In 2013, the annual budget of STIKK was €365,900, 13% of which deriving form self-income (member contributions, trainings, etc.)

STIKK has a full-time staff composed of eight individuals. Five of them are programming employees and project implementers, while three are administrative employees. Depending on project needs, STIKK involves other consultants. During 2013, there were 17 consultants involved in STIKK's projects.

STIKK has implemented numerous projects covering the IT sector and played an important role in the advocacy of sector's interests. STIKK is a co-founder of Innovation Centre

Kosovo (ICK) where new companies get help and support on establishing their ideas. ICK and STIKK support especially women's businesses through their project "Womminovation". STIKK helps on the dialogue between EU and Kosovo in the field of IT development and research, meanwhile it has produced a series of studies for the sector. Additionally, STIKK implements numerous projects that aim trainings for IT professionals and the opportunity to exchange with international organisations, including the annual conference KOSICT.

The main achievement of STIKK in the field of advocacy is the participation of some IT products in the list of goods exempt from custom tax on the Law on Goods Exempt from Custom Tax and Goods with Zero Rate of the Custom Tax. The advocacy on this issue required a long procedure. It started in 2010, while the law was implemented by the Kosovo Assembly in January 2014. In this case, first there was reluctance and lack of understanding from the relevant institutions. Nevertheless, in the final law there was a range of technologic products included: optical fibre cables, printing toners, screens, etc.

The involvement of these products exempt from custom tax is expected to help the companies by enabling a better cash flow (because of the exempt from custom tax fees before the sale is made) and a higher level of sales, as a result of the competing price in the region. This will also help the state budget, since it is expected to decrease informality and smuggling, and by this, the budget income will increase.

The approved list of the goods exempt from tax did not include all of the products required by STIKK. While there are still problems on law implementation by customs for the list approved. This happens as a result of different interpretations on some customs codes that may have more than one meaning. However, STIKK advocacy gives a good example on how an organized interest group can bring benefit on a specific sector and the economy in general.

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*Which are STIKK's strong points and how it surfaced in the case of advocacy for exemption of custom tax?*

### **Organization and internal capacities**

One of the main virtues of STIKK is its well-organized work. The structured, professional and systematic approach of functioning, enables the associate to produce concrete results, to build trust of the members and to leave good impression when dealing with foreign partners.

The correct and systematic implementation of provisions of the organization statute is one of the components that enable the associate to function properly. The General Assembly is the highest organ, which selects the Executive Board for a 2 year mandate. During 2013, the board had four meetings, which were open for the participation of every member as an observer. The Board approves working plans and chooses the Executive Director. The Executive Director, Vjollca Çavolli, coordinates the daily activities of the association, as well as the services given to the members, including the implementation of the projects, coordination between the members and updating them with the latest activities, etc.

The Executive Board creates working groups and commissions to work on specific issues. From the research was found that regular members of the association always respond when invited to give their expertise contribution to the working groups. For example, when working on the initiative for the approval of the law on custom tax, member companies have held six meetings in working groups, where they compiled the list of IT products that were to exempt from custom tax, meanwhile they established reasoning arguments.

Secondly, another key factor on the association's decent function is the level of managing relations with the members,

from STIKK Administration, and its impartial position. This allows consensual attitude and cohesion within the member companies. Besides the consensus achieved in level of the Board, there is the impression that an advantage towards this direction, is the fact that the current Director's background is not related to the sector or the member companies. Another factor linked to the independent administration is the existence of a special and neutral space (association offices) which gathers the companies to a common aim.

The provision of this bias and the consensual positioning of the association, is often troublesome in other sectors, where internal competition between companies disables a decent cooperation. Particular companies may be seen as association monopolising and defenders of their own personal interest. Thus, speaking with a voice from the side of industry is considered substantial. Institutions and other decision-makers are put in an unfavourable media and political position, if they are to decide over an interest that may appear as favoured. The consistency of attitudes was mentioned as a strong point of STIKK also in the case of advocacy on the law for exempt from custom tax. It is important not to support a sector only in favour of public interest, but to work for the public and group interest in the meantime.

The third important element is the proactive approach of the Administration and Regular Members of STIKK, in order to accomplish the duties that derive from being a part of the association. What left a good impression to the interviewed delegates from institutions, was that STIKK's representatives have always accepted the invitations on consultative activities. Furthermore, STIKK has always been represented by the right hierarchical level (mostly by the Director) with clear and substantial attitudes. And this is not only the case of consultations for custom tax exempt, where STIKK took part also in the meetings of parliamentary commissions, but also during the meetings on sectorial policies organized by MTI.

The average level of education and social awareness amongst members of the IT sector is very high, compared to other sectors, and this is a great explanation of the association's professional approach to issues. As a result, this brings a qualitative content of the materials of STIKK, and a much decent presentation when dealing with foreign institutions. A source of motivation for companies to participate comes from the benefit the firms get through implemented projects and STIKK's advocacy activities, and this emphasizes the importance of cooperating and mutual responsibilities.

Fourthly, the internal capacities and the serious functioning are related to generation of the income from donors, without whose contribution it would be impossible to implement the projects. STIKK was originally founded with the help of Norway but later has established many projects from other donors such as the British Council, GIZ, USAID, SPARK, etc. Donors interviewed consider that they would be willing to support also other sectorial associations that have similar level of organization and capacity as STIKK.

### **Argumentation with facts**

A developing country faces many parallel challenges and limited capacities, which disable it to recognize all the necessities of the business sector. Therefore, one of the roles of businesses is to become an active part of policy making by producing empirical data that helps the country in the process of making decisions.

STIKK has had this in mind when lobbying for the change of tax policies, but also when it participated in various discussions on sectorial policies and strategies, producing numerous researches and analysis related to these goals.

Reluctance to exempt IT products from custom tax, came mostly from the fact that there was hesitancy within institutions, like Ministry of Finances, which are responsible for the budget and give their evaluation for the fiscal impact

of legislative initiatives. Fee exempt was considered as a budget decrease and the IT products were considered as luxurious, whose consumption would not play any role in the economy development.

Such attitudes are understandable at some point, knowing that institutions as MF have no capacities, enough time, and political motivation to analyse the fiscal impact of every reform, or to prepare the list of products by themselves. It is easy to come to the conclusion that it is the responsibility of advocacy associations like STIKK to advocate on their specific needs, especially if at the same time they are helping the state. An official from public institutions, said in the interview: “If you want to push something forward, get ready!”

That is why, as part of its advocating campaign, STIKK has produced an argumentative work where it presented its approach and attitude. Meanwhile it has drafted the specific list of products that had to be exempt from custom tax, according to tariff codes. Among other things, it was mentioned that custom tax exempt of IT equipment import, was a European practice, including also regional countries, and that the medium term fiscal impact would be positive for the state, increasing the sales and decreasing informality. Precisely, it was an argument that the budget would have negative effect only in the first year of the implementation, while in the following years, the income will multiply.

Apart from this, it was stated that the main consumer of IT product in Kosovo is the Government, and that in the end the custom tax will be invoiced to it. This would make the money to move from one pocket to the other, and that would also damage the liquidity of the companies. In addition, an extra argument was the fact that in a modern economy, the approach to modern technology is an important aspect for the education of population.

The reasonable approach and fact presentation is considered as positive by public institutions. Authority representatives

agreed that without this manner of intervening, the IT products would hardly be included in the list of goods exempt from custom tax. Providing comparative data, especially with regional states, was evaluated as effective and convincing.

### **Creating the map of parties of interest, understanding their motivations and building coalitions**

An association is entitled to the arguments it presents, but this doesn't mean that these arguments will be understood by institutions, or that the aims for which the advocacy is being made will be achieved. The advocacy strategy is important in this part. STIKK's experience with the case of custom tax exemption proves the experience of many similar organisations from other countries, that advocacy for different issues will be unsuccessful without at least three components:

- a) clear identification of parties of interest and others that have impact in the issue;
- b) understanding motivation that would encourage these parties to become active in this matter;
- c) establishing a wide coalition to enable change.

One of the challenges of STIKK is the fact that the technology and innovation sector is not a preoccupation of any ministry in particular, but many ministries handle various dimensions of this sector's issues. Knowing this, the association has no main political address which would then turn into a sponsor or ally.

Hence, in the example of exempt from custom tax, finding a partner in the government was decisive in gaining political support to the initiative within institutions. Talking about this case, the requested political support came from Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MTI), which at that time was directed by Ms. Mimoza Kusari – Lila. Support was requested

(and found) also among individual deputies (from almost all political parties) who understood the importance of cooperation with the private sector.

However, collaborating with associations of other industry sectors or general chambers of business was the first step on creating the coalition. This is because the law to be approved covered all industries and the coordinated lobbying was flowing naturally and effectively, since it created higher political pressure. The initiative for exempt from custom tax was an action taken by a wide coalition with the chambers of business, American Chamber in particular. But, for the involvement of specific IT product on the list, there was a special advocacy.

Reluctance or delays on law approval happened because of the lack of motivation and political reasons from the main parties included in the legislative process – they would not understand the importance of this action, or considered there is not enough political benefit from it.

Ministry of Finances first was unwilling because of the negative fiscal impact that could happen. Kosovo Assembly took an important part of the project, where the law was held for almost two years. The commission to analyse the law was led by an opposition party, which would not consider as a priority the approval of an initiative sponsored by the Governmental. Finally, a law variant did not get the assignment by the President Jahjaga, because of some articles that allowed the Government to change the list of goods exempt from custom tax under Governmental decisions.

The understanding of motivational and political nuances of the institutions, parties and deputies, is key to developing an advocacy strategy. That is why, except producing information and analysis, STIKK worked in a systematic way with representatives from political and state institutions, only to convey the message that the whole country would benefit from the approval of this law. The association sent individual



letters to deputies, to explain its attitudes, participated in the meetings of parliamentary commissions, organized meetings with political parties, met the deputies individually, used its diplomatic channels by pushing the pressure between donors, and used medias to spread the message of this issue.

In every advocacy process individual relations are very important, and this proved to be a necessity also with the example of STIKK. Impartiality of the association and the contact numbers and addresses of the representatives from decision-making institutions, which the Director or other members had on their lists, made the meetings possible only by making a phone call.

An advantage of STIKK during this challenge was also the fact that through its advocacy efforts, there was no reluctance by any other association. Almost all of the STIKK members are importers in Kosovo and there is no IT producing industry that would be harmed by the exempt from custom tax of the import. In other cases of advocacy, the associations should have in mind managing the “conflict” with interest groups that could oppose the initiatives. The objection of the tobacco industry on restrictive articles of the Law on Tobacco, can be mentioned as a good example of this.

## **Public framing of the issue and the constructive approach**

What made STIKK special was the clarity of its demand, the argumentation that all become winners for a long period of time, as well as the constructive and diplomatic approach towards the institutions. Representatives from public institutions said that advocacies which are not well-analysed, often make the Government uncomfortable and make anti-productive effect. This, in many cases is unnecessary, given that the solutions can often be found through dialogue and collaboration, without having to undergo radical measures. Harsh public critics, or even protests should always be considered as the last option.

One of the other aspects that make the Government uncomfortable and risks to create anti-productive effect, is also the method how the issue has been presented or framed in the public opinion. At a time when investigative journalism became more vigilant on catching public officials violating the law and to launch sensational news, creating a perception that favourable decisions on a particular sector work in chiental benefit, makes the public officials unwilling to support the initiative. That is why the issue should be framed in a way to emphasize the general development and social impact, not just the direct benefit of certain companies. If this stands correctly, and is not just a cover, it should be the basic of an advocacy strategy.

In the actual case of STIKK, many discussed the exempt from custom tax of some expensive products, from which only some particular businesses would benefit at the expense of the state budget. Therefore there was a clear message that the exempt from custom tax would increase the budget and help the industry development, and would create new job opportunities. Framing the case should always put emphasis on general and social interest, not only on the individual interest.

### Internal organisation and capacities

- Clear identification of common interest of the members;
- Systematic and regular function of the association in accordance with the statute;
- Independent and impartial role of the association's staff and building trust in partners;
- Speaking with one voice with external partners;
- Offering services and definite benefit for members;
- Companies' contribution (monetary and expertise) to create ownership and accountability upon the association;
- Income generation for effective and qualitative work that brings more donors.

### Argumentation with facts

- Articulating attitudes and clear arguments to support the advocacy case;
- Presenting information on arguments, for example, calculations on fiscal effects of a legislative initiative;
- Comparative data usage supporting the argument, especially when a good operating in the region is requested;

### Map of the involved parties, their interests and creating coalitions

- Addressing the parties that have an impact on the issue and understanding their motivations;
- Creating a wide coalition to support the initiative (e.g. from other industries);
- Finding political support (e.g. MTI);
- Systematic and active work with the factors who make an impact (regular group and individual meetings, letters, informal meetings, etc.);

### Public framing of the issue and constructive approach

- Framing the issue by emphasizing the general and social benefit, not the individual one;
- Diplomatic and collaborative approach with institutions, without causing conflict when unnecessary;

List of the persons interviewed for the case study

1. Vjollca Çavolli, Executive Director of STIKK,
2. Valon Canhasi, member and former employee of STIKK,
3. Shkumbin Brestovci, Director of Board of STIKK, Rrota Company
4. Enver Doko, former Director of Board of STIKK, Comtrade Company
5. Naim Huruglica, former Director of the Customs of Kosovo
6. Jan Braathu, Norway's Ambassador in Kosovo
7. Teuta Sahatqija, Kosovo Assembly deputy
8. Bernard Nikaj, former Minister Counsellor, and then Minister of MTI

## 2.2 Beekeepers for common interest

### *The Beekeepers Association ‘Poleni’ from Mitrovica*

The gathering of citizens who share the same profession or concern in an association could serve their common interest. One example of a successful organization are the main beekeepers of Mitrovica, who got organized in an association that could serve as a model for beekeepers throughout the country. The Beekeepers Association ‘Poleni’ from Mitrovica managed to mobilize members who have benefitted from their voluntary contribution, have organized trainings, lectures, fairs and study visits. They also managed to have good relations with the Municipality, have benefitted from the support of Ministry of Agriculture, and generally, managed to increase productivity and sale of their products.

Now, the Association has reached a quite developed stage and is self-sustainable at least for a basic functioning. The Association can be strengthened further in order to advocate strongly in decision making together with beekeepers of all Kosovo in order to push for their interest. In order to be able for a strong lobbying, beekeepers should advocate to decision makers, increase membership, keep involved and engage with beekeepers from all over Kosovo who believe the Association protects their best interest.

### *Introduction on Beekeepers Association ‘Poleni’*

Beekeeping and honey production in Kosovo are among the most important economic sectors for the country, especially for rural areas of Kosovo. In Kosovo there are about 6,500 active beekeepers with about 70,600 beehives. According to Mr. Arsim Memaj, officer in this Ministry, beekeepers present a model of institutional cooperation and in this sense they are very well organized.

Beekeepers in Kosovo are mainly organized through

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associations that operate at the municipal level. These associations are gathered in one common association, the League of Beekeepers of Kosovo. One of the associations which is particularly distinguished for its form of organization, engagement and success, and which at the same time is considered as an example for other local associations is the Beekeepers Association 'Poleni' from Mitrovica.

Established in 2000 at the initiative of three beekeepers, this membership based association is involved in the protection and development of beekeeping sector in Mitrovica municipality, which has about 700 beekeepers and 3.000 beehives. In 2013, beekeepers had a yield of about 25 kg per hive. A major role in achieving these yields was played by the suitable climatic conditions for beekeeping throughout 2013. In 2014, however, the climate was not so suitable for beekeeping sector, thus lowering honey production yields. In 2014, the average production was 5 kg of honey per hive. The average honey production yield per year is about 10 kg per hive. There is no clear evidence that would indicate that production yield has increased as a result of the work done by the Association, but this is how it is assessed.

From three members that Association 'Poleni' had when it was established, its membership now counts 70 beekeepers (10%), with about 2.000 hives (two thirds), i.e., majority of large beekeepers. Beekeepers of Mitrovica constantly say that protection, development and increase of honey bee productivity are in their interest. Their work has resulted in the increase of bee stocks, increase of sale and increase of profit and number of people involved in beekeeping. Each member of the Association pays a € 10 annual membership fee, thus contributing in creation of an annual symbolic fund of about € 700.

The fund collected from membership fees is used to cover the costs of lectures and for paying membership fee of this association in other regional and central level associations and for participation in fairs. Beekeepers Association 'Poleni'

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is member the Union of Farmers of Mitrovica Region and of the League of Beekeepers of Kosovo.

### *How are the beekeepers of Mitrovica organized?*

Beekeepers Association 'Poleni' is a well organized and structured organization. Its three leaders handle actively affairs of the Association and meet every second week to discuss about the plans and activities that need to be undertaken for bee protection and development.

The Association has regular monthly communication with its members, at least during monthly lectures. Every year there is a meeting of Assembly of Association which discusses both the work performed in the course of the year and plans for the coming year. In the beginning of each year, Association meets its members and distributes to them financial reports of the association for the previous year. The last such meeting was held on 4 January 2014, while the next meeting with members of Association, in which financial report of 2014 will be presented, is expected to be held on 3 January 2015.

Convention of the Association is held every four years. It elects the chairman with votes of all members. The last convention held on 6 February 2010 was attended by 60 members. Chairman was elected with 40 votes. In addition to chairman, the Association also votes for the deputy chairman and secretary. Current chairman of Beekeepers Association 'Poleni', Sabri Haziri, is the third chairman whose mandate started in 2010.

### *What does Association Poleni do?*

Organization of lectures for beekeepers presents one of the most frequent activities organized by the Association Poleni. The lecturers in these lectures that are held on monthly basis are mainly members of the association. In them beekeepers are informed about actions they should undertake in order to

protect, develop and increase bee productivity. On average, 25 beekeepers attend these lectures. Whereas when the lectures are held in spring, which is the beginning of beekeeping season, number of beekeepers attending these lectures reaches 50.

Beekeepers Artan and Denis Abdurrahmani say to have received a lot of information in these lectures, adding also the importance of exchanging experience and information with other beekeepers attending the lectures. The lectures mainly provide basic information on beekeeping. Due to the lack of funds, Association is not able to provide training on more advanced topics of the beekeeping sector.

Every year, the Association organizes beekeeping fairs in which products of about ten beekeepers of the municipality are exhibited. In the last two years this fair was organized by the Union of Farmers Associations of Mitrovica Region. Mitrovica beekeepers are regular participants of Kosovo-wide fair that is organized in Prishtina by the League of Beekeepers of Kosovo. They also participate in various agricultural and food fairs held in Mitrovica and Prishtina. Members of Association have also participated in few study visits abroad organized with the support of the Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo.



### *Who do Mitrovica beekeepers cooperate with?*

Beekeepers Association ‘Poleni’ is member of the Union of Farmers Associations of Mitrovica Region and of the League of Beekeepers of Kosovo. The Association also cooperates with the Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo, a national organisation working on rural development and production of healthy food. The Association has influenced on local authorities to allocate funds to support beekeepers. Members of this Association also benefit from subsidies given by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development.

The Association has managed to establish good relations and cooperation with the Department of Agriculture and Economic Development of Municipality of South Mitrovica, as result of which beekeepers of this municipality were given subsidies and the right to use the municipal assembly hall for monthly lectures. In past years, beekeepers had almost no support at all from local authorities.

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development every year allocates a fund of € 500.000 for all beekeepers of the country. Through this fund, a direct support of € 10 for every hive is provided to beekeepers that have more than 30 beehives. This fund also provides grants for supporting investment in apiaries up to 60% of investment foreseen with a detailed business plan developed by beekeepers of Mitrovica. This support of the Ministry benefits the beekeepers of Mitrovica, too. Beekeepers Association Poleni does not have a regular communication with the ministry, which communicates with the League of Beekeepers of Kosovo.

### *What are the main achievements?*

The cause that brought beekeepers of Mitrovica together in Beekeepers Association ‘Poleni’ was, and still is, protection,

development and increase of bee productivity. Major achievements of Mitrovica beekeepers is the increase of number of bee stocks in this municipality for about 150% compared to the period when the Association was established in 2002. From about 1.200 hives that beekeepers had in 2002 to the actual number of about 3.000 hives.

Beekeepers have managed to influence the decision making processes in the Municipality of South Mitrovica. As result of this in 2014 this municipality allocated € 7.500 subsidies for beekeeping. Through this fund, 200 bee hives were distributed to about 80 beekeepers of Mitrovica.

Participation in fairs has been of great importance for members of Association, since they were given the opportunity to promote and sell their products, as well as to extend their market for selling these products. Jeton Sadiku, member of association, links the increase of number of bee stocks to 116 hives with participation in fairs. By participating only in one fair he manages to sell a significant amount of honey and its products, which sometimes is as much as 400kg.

Another achievement of beekeepers is study visits conducted in Albania and Serbia with the support of partner organizations. These visits served to exchange experiences with beekeepers of these countries and acquire new knowledge on beekeeping, whose implementation has had an impact on development and growth of beekeeping sector in the municipality.

### *What next?*

Communication with beekeepers has highlighted the fact that beekeepers who are not members of association lack information on activities of Association. This could be one of the reasons why only 10% of beekeepers operating in the municipality are members of this Association. Naim Hajdari, a beekeeper who currently is not a member of the Association,

says he is interested to become a member and to pay membership fee regularly. It remains to leaders of the Association to improve communication with all beekeepers and at the same time work in increasing membership numbers in the association. The Association should belong to all beekeepers and maybe less costly membership should be offered to beekeepers that have smaller bee stock.

On the other hand, Association should increase its efforts also within the League of Beekeepers of Kosovo. As part of the League, in cooperation with all beekeepers associations from other municipalities, it should enhance cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Department in order to increase the support of this ministry for beekeeping sector and beekeepers.

### *The secret behind the success*

Almost all interviewees during the drafting of this report said that Beekeepers Association 'Poleni' is model for other similar organizations in Kosovo. The secret of its success relies on several factors:

- Will – although they do not receive any financial compensation, Association leaders have the energy and great will to work in strengthening the Association and in helping the Mitrovica beekeepers. Every one of them is employed in other institutions where they work on regular basis, but this does not prevent them to continue activity in the Association after working hours and at weekends.
- Professionalism – of some beekeepers in the Association has been a great help for new beekeepers in developing and increasing their bee stocks. The work of Association lecturers has been very meaningful, particularly for new beekeepers, in acquiring knowledge on how to protect, develop and increase bee productivity.
- Exchange of experiences – between the members of

Association and beekeepers outside the country proved to be a very efficient mechanism for achieving the common goal of beekeepers. In this way they are given the opportunity to see closely the advanced production technologies and get familiar with modern trends of protecting, developing and increasing honey bee production.

List of the persons interviewed for the case study

1. Sabri Haziri – Chairman of Beekeepers Association “Poleni”, Mitrovica
2. Sali Ahmeti – Vice-Chairman of Beekeepers Association “Poleni”, Mitrovica
3. Artan Abdurrahmani – beekeeper, member of Beekeepers Association “Poleni”, Mitrovicë
4. Denis Abdurrahmani – beekeeper, member of Beekeepers Association “Poleni”, Mitrovica
5. Jeton Sadiku – Beekeeper, Beekeepers Association “Poleni”, Mitrovica
6. Qerim Ramadani – Secretary, the League of Beekeepers of Kosova, Prishtina
7. Arsim Memaj – Division of Livestock Production, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Prishtina
8. Hysnije Mikullovcic – Senior Officer for Livestock Production, Department of Agriculture and Economic Development, Municipality of South Mitrovica, Mitrovica
9. Anita Abazi – Officer, Department of Agriculture and Economic Development, Municipality of South Mitrovica, Mitrovica
10. Naim Hajdari – beekeeper, Mitrovica

## 2.3 How to defend the public interest with little popular support? Lessons learned from the anti-tobacco campaign

A significant role in the adoption of the Law on Tobacco Control, in the form that receives the highest appraisals from the World Health Organization, was played by some associations joined in the Anti-Tobacco Campaign (ATC). Through an intensive lobbying campaign with the Ministry of Health and members of Assembly of Kosovo, the coalition managed by the present law to ban smoking of tobacco in public places and tobacco product display.

In order to achieve that purpose, partnerships were established with institutions, media and civil society organizations. The network of associations managed to be represented in the institutional mechanisms in the drafting process of the Law on Tobacco Control, as well as it has developed persuasive arguments in support of its positions on the Law. They succeeded in limiting the influence of the tobacco industry via special meetings with representatives of institutions, members of Assembly and journalists. The coalition is composed of 17 associations and institutions whose purpose is the preservation of public health. In addition 56 civil society organizations operating in the country openly supported them.

### *Introduction*

The present paper aims to reflect the activities of the associations and institutions in the process of adoption of the legislation on tobacco control, as an example of how powerful such associations may be even when confronted with enormous challenges. The method of organization, actions and key achievements will be discussed in order to share lessons learned for other potential initiatives in defense of public interest. An analysis and special description is devoted

to key moments that at the same time are the key to success of activists.

In drafting the present paper different representative, who represent opposite opinions on the adoption of the Law, were consulted. On the one hand, consultations were held with the representatives of the Ant-Tobacco Coalition, representatives of government institutions and civil society activists, and on the other hand interviews were conducted with the representatives of the tobacco industry and members of the Assembly who expressed differing opinions in the process of review and adoption of the Law on Tobacco Control by the Assembly of Kosovo.

### *Activities of the Anti-Tobacco Coalition (ATC)*

In 2011 Kosovo Advocacy and Development Center (KADC) assumed the initiative to establish the Anti-Tobacco Coalition (ATC). The purpose of establishing the Anti-Tobacco Coalition was protection of public health, present and future generations from the devastating consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke to health, society, environment and economy. In the view of the Coalition, this could be achieved through an implementation and improvement of the legal framework aiming at the reduction of prevalence of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke. 17 associations and institutions joined the coalition whose primary task was protection of public health.

In a Memorandum of Understanding, all ATC members pledged to engage for:

- I. Review of the tobacco legislation;
- II. Smoking ban in 100 % of the space of public places;
- III. Ban of tobacco sale to persons under the age of 18.

Coalition members made a commitment to organize roundtables with relevant parties to discuss best practices,

challenges, advantages and obstacles influencing the implementation of the Law on tobacco. At the same time, they expressed their willingness to draft recommendations for the review of legislation on the use of tobacco and other plans. The final goal was the approximation of legislation on the use of tobacco in Kosovo with the most relevant international document on tobacco control: the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.<sup>12</sup> Some of the requirements deriving from the Convention and that are mandatory for WHO member states are as follows:

- I. Price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco;
- II. Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke;
- III. Full ban on all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship;
- IV. Elimination of all forms of illicit trade of tobacco;
- V. Ban on sales of tobacco products to minors.

ATC established a close co-operation with many institutions, mechanisms and individuals relevant in the decision-making process for tobacco control, such as the Ministry of Health and the Assembly Committee on Health and thus it requested from these institutions to undertake initiatives to amend the Law on Tobacco.

The coalition drafted a platform with arguments on the need to amend the Law on Tobacco. Such amendment required a full ban on smoking tobacco in public spaces and a ban on the display of tobacco in retail locations. The arguments developed were a counter-response to the trade industry arguments that the requirements were in contradiction with the constitutional principle of free trade. The basic argument of the coalition was protection of public health, whilst the basic argument of the tobacco industry was protection of free competition.

The first results of the anti-tobacco activists' commitment was crowned with the initiative undertaken by the Ministry of Health to amend the Law on Tobacco of 2007. The law in question was not in full compliance with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control since it did not ban smoking in public places and it did not fully ban display of tobacco products in retail locations. Such a definition, to a considerable extent, marginalized its purpose and did not provide health for citizens.

Ministry of Health established a special Working Group within the framework of the initiative to amend the law. The ATC became part of that initiative. The coalition developed the concept paper to amend the Law on Tobacco and the same paper served as a justification for the necessary legal amendments. Moreover the development of the new Draft Law on Tobacco Control was entrusted to the coalition. Such a situation was extremely favorable for the anti-tobacco activists because there was a real chance to incorporate all of their requests in the draft law and such requests were indeed incorporated.

Coalition members undertook other actions. Their purpose was to ensure wider support and create a public opinion in support of their positions and proposals. For this purpose, according to Mr. Spahija, special meetings were held with the caucus leaders in the Assembly of Kosovo, other MPs and influential journalists as well as roundtables and public hearings. The anti-tobacco coalition managed to present to all stakeholders their ideas and position on tobacco control. For this reason, three roundtables with journalists and one roundtable with civil society representatives were organized.

Relations and regular communication established with civil society organizations resulted with their extensive support to the Anti-Tobacco Coalition. An important role in establishing such communication between the coalition and civil society was played by the Democracy for Development (D4D) think tank, and with the support of the Olaf Palme International

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Center (OPIC), it served as a bridge between the anti-tobacco activists and other activists of civil society. “Whenever the public interest is violated, associations and their membership working in defense of public interest are more powerful than the associations and the membership that violate a given public interest” said Visar Sutaj, who back then was the official responsible with the D4D.

The support by civil society activists for the requests and positions of the Coalition resulted in a public letter, dated 28 January 2013, wherein 56 civil society organizations addressed 120 members of Assembly of Kosovo.<sup>13</sup> In the letter members of Assembly (and similar letters were submitted to the President, Prime Minister and Minister of Health) were asked that during the adoption process of the Law on Tobacco Control to pay attention to:

- Full ban on smoking tobacco in all public places;
- Limit the sale of tobacco products including the display of tobacco products in retail locations;
- Ban on all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and
- Provide a defense of tobacco control policies from the commercial interests of the tobacco industry by restricting the interaction between the government (holders of public posts) and the tobacco industry.

One of those individuals who received the letter by civil society was Jeton Svirca, member of the Assembly of Kosovo in the previous legislature. Mr. Svirca emphasized that the letter in question gave him undisputable arguments in favor of supporting the requests of civil society. Furthermore, he stressed that the letter served as a tool to persuade his colleagues to work in defense of public health.

Witnessing the growing public and political support to the positions of the Anti-Tobacco Coalition, the tobacco industry intensified its activities in order to defend its interests and

thus hired a consultant to address and defend its interests. Përparim Tushaj, the consultant hired by the tobacco industry, emphasized that their primary goal is the prevention of incorporation of a legal provision in the law prohibiting the display of tobacco products in the retail locations. In his view that is in contradiction with the constitutional principle of free trade and contrary to the principle for protection of free competition, and has thus resulted in the violation of the country's Constitution through the encroachment of principles of free trade and competition. In relation to the role of the Anti-Tobacco Coalition, Mr. Tushaj considered that the coalition and its member associations were manipulated by the WHO.

However the claims by the tobacco industry were categorically rejected by the WHO Director in Kosovo, Mr. Skender Sylja. He emphasized that the institution in question has been operating in Kosovo since 1998 by implementing many projects for public health and that the mandate of the institution is provision of technical and professional assistance to the country's institutions in drafting relevant legislation on public health. Mr. Sylja did not deny the role of the WHO in the process of adoption of the Law on Tobacco Control nor the support given to the anti-tobacco activists. In his view, such support was provided with the clear goal to fully implement the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in Kosovo, and to adopt a law that would take into consideration citizens' health and not businesses' interests. Mr. Sylja reported that, because of its role and contribution given as leader of the Anti-Tobacco Coalition in the process of drafting the Law on Tobacco Control, KADC will be awarded the international prize "World no tobacco day" for 2015.

The WHO prize is awarded to activists and organizations that show success at the international level to reduce the tobacco consumption levels.

## *Key achievements of the Anti-Tobacco Coalition*

On 4 April 2013, Assembly of Kosovo adopted the Law on Tobacco Control thus repealing the 2007 Law on Tobacco. 71 members of the Assembly voted in favor, 2 abstained and none voted against.

Compared to the 2007 Law on Tobacco, the Law on Tobacco Control fully bans tobacco consumption in public places and display of tobacco in retail locations in full compliance with the requirements deriving from the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Moreover, the Law on Tobacco Control in a special chapter provided the defense of tobacco control policies from commercial and other interests of the tobacco industry. The law in question ensures this function by restricting the interaction between the government and tobacco industry, whereby such interaction is allowed only when it is necessary for the effective regulation of tobacco industry or tobacco products. As a matter of fact, such legal definition is beyond the WHO provisions and shows the willingness and seriousness of the Assembly of Kosovo to control tobacco consumption.

## *What's next?*

The Anti-Tobacco Coalition continues to operate even today. Its primary focus is now on the full implementation of the Law and activities to oversee and monitor is practical implementation. The Coalition is part of the Working Group of the Ministry of Health drafting three administrative instructions. Specific steps for the implementation of the Law on Tobacco Control will be provided by the aforementioned administrative instructions. According to KADC Director, Shkumbin Spahija, two administrative instructions have already been drafted by the working group and all that remains is for the Minister of Health to sign them in order to enter into force, and that is expected to happen very soon.

In addition to this, anti-tobacco activists are represented in the Inter-Ministerial Council on Tobacco Control. The Council was established by the Government of Kosovo in order to oversee the practical implementation of the Law on Tobacco Control since problems emerged in its implementation on the ground. Next to the Anti-Tobacco Coalition, 16 other institutions and organizations working on tobacco control are part of the mechanism in question.

### *The Secret of Success*

The entire commitment of the Anti-Tobacco Coalition was based on key principles that represent the secret of success that the coalition has achieved:

- Defense of general interest – Anti-Tobacco Coalition had a very noble goal, i.e., the protection of population’s health through tobacco consumption control respectively a ban on smoking tobacco in public places and other actions. None of the activists gained any material profit from the adoption and implementation of the Law on Tobacco Control. Their only interest was the general/public interest. On the other hand, the tobacco industry was mainly focused on the defense of economic interests of tobacco production, processing and retail companies. This has led to the fact that anti-tobacco activists’ requests received vast public and political support within and outside the country, and from different institutions and organizations.
- Partnership with institutions – this was a basic principle based upon which the Coalition relied throughout its activities. Almost all of its actions undertaken involved the representatives of relevant institutions such as the Ministry of Health, Food and Veterinary Agency as well as the National Institute of Public Health. Activists have managed to establish sustainable partnerships with these and other institutions. Participation of the Anti-Tobacco Coalition in the Inter-Ministerial Council on Tobacco Control and Working Group of Ministry of Health drafting three

administrative instructions are the best indicators of such partnership.

- Provision of expertise to institutions – The Coalition served as a source of expertise to relevant institutions, i.e., when they lacked professional resources to provide the necessary data. In consultation with international experts, activists secured access to the newest research/scientific report on tobacco control and most advanced models of tobacco control in other countries. Moreover they [activists] compiled the draft Law on Tobacco Control and thus ensured that it is in full compliance with international documents on tobacco control.
- Partnership with civil society and media were essential elements in shaping a public opinion against tobacco. This partnership was achieved thanks to the interaction of civil society actors and media, coordination of actions with the Coalition and joining of “forces” as in the case of the letter submitted to the country’s institutions. At the same time, representatives of civil society and media were signatory parties to the Memorandum of Understand establishing the Anti-Tobacco Coalition.
- Constructive advocacy – Throughout their activities, the anti-tobacco activists had a constructive approach to decision-making mechanisms. The Anti-Tobacco Coalition never ever deviated from this principle. This provided to the coalition access to many national and international institutions and mechanisms. All the foregoing furthermore had a decisive role in supporting the positions and requests of the Coalition to adopt a Law banning smoking of tobacco in public places and display of tobacco in retail locations.

List of the persons interviewed for the case study

1. Visar Sutaj, KDI, Prishtina
2. Shkumbin Spahija, KADC, Prishtina

3. Arben Lila, KADC, Prishtina
4. Faik Hoti, Ministry of Health, National Tobacco Coordinator, Prishtina
5. Jeton Svirca, Former member of Assembly of Kosovo, Justice Party
6. Ardian Gjini, Former member of Assembly of Kosovo Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
7. Përparim Tushaj, Tobacco Industry, Prishtina
8. Skender Syla, World Health Organization, Prishtina

# Case Studies from other Countries

*3.1 Developing Communities Project, Inc (DCP)*

*3.2 Ireland: Conradh na Gaeilge*

*3.3 European Women's Lobby*

### 3.1 Chicago, USA: Developing Communities Project, Inc

DCP organization is an example of effecting change without massive numbers. The population of the Chicago is close to Kosovo, versus other organizations with much larger memberships than Kosovo could support. Finally, their organizing methods are based on those of the famed organizer Saul Alinsky, making for a very interesting set of tactics to analyze.

The closure of several Chicago steel mills in the 1970s and 1980s led to massive unemployment in Southeast Chicago. In response, Jerry Kellman formed the Developing Communities Project (DCP) in 1986, which aims to improve “the quality of life for residents in the Greater Roseland” area through local action campaigns. DCP specifically focuses on issues like “poverty, unemployment, urban violence, low educational achievement, public safety, environmental justice, and limited access to resources.”

Once Kellman founded the group, he needed two things to make it successful: money and an executive director. Kellman knew to target state grant programs, foundation grants, and church dues for funds.<sup>14</sup><sup>15</sup> Next, he needed a leader who would train and inspire the people, but not speak down to them.<sup>16</sup> At the time, this area of Chicago was predominately black and given the history of racial tension in the U.S., many African Americans would not trust a white man to lead them. Eventually, he choose Barack Obama as DCP’s first executive director. Obama was young, black, energized, and intelligent.

Once Obama took over, he began training DCP’s current members and adding new ones. The one-on-one is the first step in an organizer’s handbook. A one-on-one is a simply a conversation between the organizer and the person he or she is trying to organize or to lobby.<sup>17</sup> The conversation serves four main purposes: (1) it determines the subject’s interests



and areas of common ground, (2) it creates a relationship between the two individuals, (3) it helps to gather information that could be useful to the organizer (such as issues in the community that need attention), and (4) it determines leadership potential.<sup>18</sup> These conversations are key to bringing people into the organization because by building a relationship and showing interest in the individual they are more likely to show up and participate in events. They feel that the organizer has personally invested in them and their story. Kellman and Obama's main task then was to empower community members to agitate for themselves. Obama also followed Alinsky's belief in meticulously planning for gatherings with anyone in power.<sup>19</sup> Everyone had a specific role to keep meetings on track and make sure the DCP message was clearly articulated. After meetings, Obama would meet with about twenty residents to evaluate the event and plan for the next one.<sup>20</sup>

For the organization's first campaign Obama focused on bringing a branch of the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training (MET) to DCP's territory.<sup>21</sup> MET offices provided training, resume review and interview skill services to unemployed Chicagoans. When Obama convinced the MET Director, Maria Cerda, to visit the area, he priory made sure that everything was in its place for the meeting. Obama trained his board members to run large public meetings, as well as taught his team, like actors, where to stand and what to say, and then moving himself to watch and direct the meeting from the background. It took six months of negotiations, but the city eventually agreed to bring a MET office to a more accessible area because of DCP's campaign.<sup>22</sup>

Three years later the group lobbied for school reform. A state bill proposed the creation of local school councils composed of parents who would have a say in hiring and firing school leaders.<sup>23</sup> DCP organized a bus trip to the state capitol to lobby for the bill. During the bus ride, Obama conducted a

“teach-in” on how to approach and lobby state legislators. Most DCP members grew up in segregation. They were skeptical that any politician would listen to them. Obama split the parents into groups, giving them each a state legislator to lobby. Over the three hour long bus ride he empowered them to believe that these men would listen to their concerns. He inspired and energized them right up to the capitol steps, then let them go. The legislators met with parents, listened to their concerns and the bill passed.<sup>24</sup>

What made DCP successful was Kellman and Obama’s modification of Alinsky’s methods and its leadership. Kellman and Obama studied those methods and adjusted them when they felt necessary. For example, Obama spurned Alinsky’s confrontation strategies like picketing local politicians’ homes, viewing such actions as too extreme.<sup>25</sup> They organized the community around their common self-interests. Then they empowered locals by training them and allowing them to run campaigns. Additionally, they ensured through training that leadership remained with a subset of the locals, not one captivating outsider. DCP left nothing up to chance, and instead employed a systematic methodology for victory. Obama himself found Kellman’s modification of the Alinsky methods to be so useful that he later used them and his history as an organizer in his political campaigns.<sup>26</sup>

Alinsky, Kellman and later Obama all contributed to the creation of “a set of rules, a clear-eyed and systemic approach that ordinary citizens can use to gain power” whatever their political party or interest may be.<sup>27</sup> Today, DCP continues to exist and affect change because of Kellman’s vision. In the past decade they won several awards, including the ShoreBank Faith-Based Community Impact Award and the Chicago Community Organizing Award.<sup>28</sup>

## 3.2 Ireland: Conradh na Gaeilge

Conradh na Gaeilge<sup>29</sup>: This organization provides an example of a national organization lobbying at the national level and the supranational level of the EU. Unlike the other organization, Conradh na Gaeilge is a cultural movement to bring back something repressed by occupiers. Additionally, the utility of the Irish language is debatable given the prominence of English, yet Conradh na Gaeilge is still successful probably because they tap into an inherent argument for the preservation of Irish culture after hundreds of years of British domination. Keeping a culture alive in spite of that, touches a nerve with Irish people, which makes it an appealing group to examine.

Gaelic (or Irish as it is also referred to) is the native language of Ireland. Its usage was greatly diminished following English efforts to stamp out Irish culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the use of Gaelic in schools was outlawed.<sup>30</sup> The English tactics and the impact of the Great Famine, which killed roughly 25% of the population and resulted in the Irish Diaspora, further diminished the language's prevalence.<sup>31</sup> Conradh na Gaeilge (the Gaelic League) was founded in 1893 by Douglas Hyde in an effort to revive Irish culture from centuries of domination by the English.<sup>32</sup> The organization, though initially apolitical, attracted many Irish nationalists, soon after Ireland achieved independence in 1922. Conradh na Gaeilge was the leading group promoting Gaelic revival when it was first founded, but its role evolved after independence. The Irish constitution established English and Gaelic as the official languages of the country and the language became a required subject in public schools.<sup>33</sup> However, the Gaelic was then and remains spoken fluently only by a minority of people. Today the group continues to lobby the government for the rights of Gaelic speakers generally and receives public funding.<sup>34</sup> Through its 180 branches, it promotes Gaelic “in every aspect of life in Ireland, from legal and educational affairs to the

development of new media and services through Irish.”<sup>35</sup> In spite of the immense lack of fluent speakers and the recognized utility of English use in the current world climate, Conradh na Gaeilge has successfully headed several campaigns in recent years in an effort to maintain this piece of ancient Irish culture.

In recent years, the organization’s greatest lobbying campaigns resulted in the successful passage of the Official Languages Act of 2003. The act gave greater statutory protection to Gaelic speakers and created a new government office, the An Coimisineir Teanga (Language Commissioner).<sup>36</sup> However, once passed, concern grew that the law was not fully implemented as it was written. Because of the lack of proper implementation, the organization has continued the campaign to lobby the government for effective execution of the law. For example, in 2012, it co-hosted a symposium entitled “The Official Languages Act 2003: Increasing Its Effectiveness”, which informed academics on the act’s shortcomings and compiled information for a comprehensive review paper that was submitted to the government to aid it in reviewing implementation.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, it continues a campaign of reaching out to journalists and publishing its own stories when the government takes what it feels is a misstep in policy.<sup>38</sup> The organization’s efforts to uphold the law are ongoing. Conradh na Gaeilge is currently undergoing a campaign for the passage of the Official Languages Bill of 2014. It has consulted the government and publicized its opinions and recommendations on draft versions of the bill.<sup>39</sup> Conradh na Gaeilge continues to admonish the government on provisions it disapproves of, fighting back against what it views as cutbacks to Gaelic language programs.<sup>40</sup> The law has not yet passed.

Conradh na Gaeilge also helped lobby to make Gaelic an official language of the EU. Initially only a “treaty” language (meaning only treaties were required to be translated into

Irish), in 2005 Gaelic became an official language of the EU.<sup>41</sup> By law, EU citizens can access any EU document in any of the official languages.<sup>42</sup> Making Gaelic an official language therefore opened up employment opportunities for the Irish in the EU, since all children in Ireland are required to study the language in school.<sup>43</sup> Making Gaelic an official language became key to the its continued survival back in Ireland. Conradh na Gaeilge joined together with other Irish cultural organizations through grassroots methods like street protests in major Irish cities.<sup>44</sup> The campaign also used clever argumentative strategies to make their position seem stronger than it actually was. Firstly, they choose to move for the advancement in status during the 2004 EU enlargement, when the EU accepted a number of relatively poorer countries (and their languages) as new members.<sup>45</sup>

Since the language became an official language, Conradh na Gaeilge has constantly fought to ensure that the language remains as such. In the run-up to the 2009 and 2014 European Parliament elections they made sure to elicit promises from the most candidates that they will promote the Irish language in Parliament<sup>46</sup> They achieved this by writing to them and publically publishing those promises on their website and on leaflets they distributed. Making their cause an election issue essentially turned the ballot box into a weapon to advance Gaelic. By galvanizing supporters to quiz their MEP candidates on their positions, the group forces MEPs to take a public stand. Those against Gaelic language stand the risk of losing the vote of Gaelic language supporters. Moreover, any MEP who later violates their pro-Gaelic stance leaves themselves open to a public shaming in the press courtesy of Conradh na Gaeilge. Within that campaign they have also pushed for the elimination of a derogation that weakens the state of Gaelic in the EU. Conradh na Gaeilge claims that the derogation has been misinterpreted to allow the EU to only interpret co-decisions.<sup>47</sup> This belittles the state of Gaelic in the EU by implying that it does not have the same

legal status as other EU official languages. This objection shows that even after achieving the goals of a past campaign, vigilant monitoring of enforcement is necessary to make sure government forces do not water down victories.

In addition to their government lobbying campaigns, Conradh na Gaeilge further push their cause through education, community outreach, and publicity events. It runs Gaelic language programs throughout the country. Additionally, the group encourages current speakers to use the language more by hosting conversation circles and empowerment workshops.<sup>48</sup> These methods help the group's underlying goal to grow the number of Irish speaking citizens. They also help the organization raise funds as well as increasing their membership and participation. By actually teaching the Irish to speak Gaelic rather than merely relying on their lobbying efforts, Conradh na Gaeilge creates new members itself thereby increasing their ability to lobby successfully.

They also engage in festival campaigns. In 2013, it partnered with a number of other groups to declare the “Bliain na Gaeilge” (Year of the Irish Language).<sup>49</sup> The year-long event celebrated the Irish language through a media campaign with thousands of events and contests throughout the country designed to educate audiences about the cultural values of the Irish language and encourage the language's spread.<sup>50</sup> Events included conversation circles, cultural festivals, Irish heritage summer schools, lectures, workshops, dances, and traditional plays, along with numerous other events.

During the year, the Bliain na Gaeilge organizations also promoted the ‘Love Irish Food’ campaign to foster the purchase of Irish made food and drink.<sup>51</sup> Using this cultural language event to promote an economic initiative smartly endeared the Irish language movement to national companies, providing the groups with a source of possible funding and paving the way for future partnerships where manufacturing capital may be of use. The idea to join together

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with like groups provided Conradh na Gaeilge with the opportunity to reach a much wider audience than it could have solely on its own resources, while promoting causes close to its own. Another “Year of the Irish Language” celebration is currently planned for 2018.<sup>52</sup>

While Conradh na Gaeilge still has a long way to go before Gaelic reclaims its former position in Ireland, they have made great progress in an uphill battle. The organization has managed its victories through traditional methods like public statements, protests, questioning government representatives, and naming and shaming government actions that go against their cause. Nevertheless, it has managed its greatest victories by continuing to review laws long after their initial passage. Without this element, their campaigns would result in laws without any real power. Targeting implementation helps achieve real change. Furthermore, one of the overall reasons for their success is their appeal to the cultural heritage of Ireland through their festival and cultural events. English is more a part of everyday Irish life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than Gaelic. The subjugation of Irish culture by the English is still a sore spot in Irish hearts and connecting language to that heritage increases their ability to argue for their cause. Without connecting it explicitly as an integral part of Irish culture, it is unlikely they would be as successful.

### 3.3 European Women's Lobby

European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest umbrella organization for women's rights at the EU level making it well-recognized and well-respected.

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) dates back to an international women's conference in London in 1987. This conference led to a widespread desire for a lobbying vehicle aimed at improving the quality of life for women in the then-European Community and in 1990, The founders saw a real need for representation of women's interests at the European level given the expanding jurisdiction of the supranational organization.<sup>53</sup> Today, they are the largest "umbrella organization of women's associations in the EU."<sup>54</sup> The EWL represents 2,000 member organizations in 31 countries and 20 European-wide networks, as well as several supporting member organizations.<sup>55</sup>

The EWL has no political, economic, religious, or philosophical doctrine, and commit themselves only to advocating for change based on a feminist perspective.<sup>56</sup> This helps them avoid dissension in such a massive organization by limiting their focus to non-controversial agendas. The organization must have the consensus of all membership organizations before taking any joint action.<sup>57</sup> Their efforts serve two overall purposes: (1) to lobby at the EU level and provide policy reports and information to key European decision-makers and (2) to encourage and assist the participation of women's groups at the EU level.<sup>58</sup> The EWL has a complex structure, with a secretariat running the organization, who reports to and mandates a steering group and policy committee elected by and reporting to the annual conference of about one-hundred delegates from the national groups, European member organizations, and supporting members.<sup>59</sup> To organize such a disparate group, the EWL has an all-encompassing set of statutes approved by their General Assembly, current as of 2013.<sup>60</sup>



EWL engages in more traditional lobbying efforts as well such as research papers and projects, education campaigns, conferences, press releases, direct lobbying to EU officials, and monitoring EU directives and legislation on women's issues.<sup>61</sup> This kind of engagement is especially important to maintain interest and coordination in such a decentralized, large umbrella group.

EWL often creates alliances with EU leaders by acting as policy advisors and partnering with them on different projects. They even have observer status with the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities.<sup>62</sup> These partnerships allow them to influence policy in a collaborative manner by working with the EU, rather than just lobbying at its officials. However, the EWL also engages in naming and shaming awareness campaigns when they feel the EU has failed.

The EWL's most successful and notable campaign was their efforts during the negotiations of the Amsterdam Treaty. At the time, only the Rome Treaty had an article regarding gender equality, establishing the right of equal pay for the sexes.<sup>63</sup> With the massive expansion of EU jurisdiction beyond the internal market, the lack of provisions concerning women became a growing gap in EU legislation. The EWL wisely choose to target this gap in the Amsterdam Treaty negotiations.

The EU set up a group to advise member-states on which issues to take up in treaty negotiations, unfortunately named "The Group of Wise Men."<sup>64</sup> The group did not include a single woman.<sup>65</sup> The EWL knew that for any lobbying effort to be successful they need to produce a professional, expertly written position paper on treaty alteration that encompassed the EWL's views. So they formed the "Wise Women's Group" a shadow body comprised of EU legal and women's rights experts from all current member-states and candidate countries. The EWL specifically sought outside help because their membership lacked the requisite legal experts needed to

produce such a paper. The Wise Women's Group consulted with national affiliate groups over the course of the next year for their input into the paper's revision process.<sup>66</sup>

They began a concerted multilevel coordinated lobbying campaign with a women's conference held in European Parliament that year. The executive planned and executed the overall strategic plan for the campaign but relied on heavy coordination efforts with their national groups to implement many of the actual lobbying activities, which focused on local MEPs and state governments. Foremost, they made sure to consult national groups at every stage of the policy revision process, until they received full approval of all affiliated member organizations for the final platform. This was important to give the platform a sense of legitimacy. The campaign's relied mainly on an inform and educate approach to mobilize EU citizens. EWL provided national groups with information materials and often helped organize national level informational meetings. In August 1996, they conducted an EU-wide survey among women to gauge their perceptions of the treaty negotiations. The results were decidedly negative, illustrating that women wanted more information on the impact of EU integration because most viewed the EU as a useless organization. For the EU to implement a treaty, it must be unanimously approved by every member state. Knowing this, the EWL used the survey results to demonstrate to EU leaders that they needed to pay attention to women's needs and show women that the EU could have a positive impact on their lives if they wanted treaty approval. Over the next two years, the EWL lobbied and gathered information at the EU level, and disseminated that information to national groups. During this period, they intensified coordination with their affiliates, helping them find funds to hold national level meetings, and providing local members with encouragement to lobby their MEPs directly. They gave national groups MEP profiles along with their phone numbers and coaxed them to call up leaders and state their opinions.<sup>67</sup>

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However, they knew that to be successful they would also have to garner European wide media attention as well, thus the EWL began a grassroots petition campaign.

Additionally, EWL partnered with other EU-wide membership organizations like the European Platform of Social NGOs and the European Trade Union Confederation to increase their negotiating power.<sup>68</sup> As a result of these efforts the final Amsterdam Treaty made the promotion of gender equality one of the EU's fundamental tasks, made the elimination of gender discrimination an aim of the EU, and gave the Council the ability to combat discrimination through its prescribed powers.<sup>69</sup> In summation, the EWL adopted four major methods to achieve success in their Amsterdam campaign: (1) a comprehensive position paper produced by experts, (2) consulting with national groups to give their positions democratic legitimacy, (3) an information awareness campaign, and (4) a lobbying campaign at the national and EU level, accompanied by efforts to garner EU-wide media attention.<sup>70</sup>

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#1: D4D Institute. September 2011. Deconstructing Election Trends 2000-2010.

#2 D4D Institute. March 2012. An Impression of Reform: How to Restore Trust on Elections?

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#6 Malazogu, Leon and Selatin Kllokoqi. September 2013. Electoral Deform: Two years later, reform is back to square zero

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#8 Dardan Berisha with contribution by Driton Qeriqi, Mjellma Hapciu and Rina Vokshi. July 2015. Bringing Justice to Elections

#9 Leon Malazogu with contribution and research assistance by Ngadhujim Halilaj and Rezarta Delibashzade. July 2015. Election Trends 2000-2014: A Numerical Analysis of Participation and Representation

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The series of endorsements and recommendations can also be found on our web-site ([www.d4d-ks.org](http://www.d4d-ks.org))

## Endnotes

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1.Delibashzade, Rezarta

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