

Notes Day 5

Reflection session

The main questions after yesterday's sessions were about the best solutions for each think tank and how to adapt to changes.

- How do I become a deep thinker and an activist?
- Should it be a proactive or reactive organisation?
- Can you avoid being an activist if you look for a systemic change?
- How is the landscape for think tanks changing? The landscape for conventional media is changing. Think tanks have a role and a function in the landscape. The tone, the style, the voice of communications will have to change
- How to build up and sustain credibility if you are an activist? Especially policymakers?

Session name: Founding a think tank Q&A session with founders.

Trainer name: Orazio Belletini, Nicolás Ducoté and Simonida Kacarska

What steps did you take to set up a think tank?

You will need three kinds of resources: people, ideas and financial resources. You will need a team of peers and people who are willing to put in the time.

Define the identity. Talk to people who have done it already and respond to the typical questions.

Getting funding: Creating projects and applying for grants and asking people to put in the money, breaking the barrier to convince people to co-invest with you.

Building media outreach: Write articles on your field, if journalists need anything, let them know that you are there. You have to build that media outreach and beg to be noticed. For example, hold a pro-bono conference in the first year.

Building up the team of professionals: Giving yourself legitimacy by creating better networks.

How to overcome challenges?

- Know the end game and exit strategy.
- Transitions in leadership are not easy. Your leadership transition needs to be well-planned.
- To keep the enthusiasm of the core group going until you get the first funding. Spend 2 to 3 hours per day pro bono.
- Keep as much as objective and evidence-based. Being critical to everyone but keep providing solutions.

- Making it an institution rather than a clique of friends who think alike. Different modes of thinking must be integrated.

How to approach donors?

Ask for the people's time to share feedback or paper. If they can participate and come to the meeting. If they are willing to introduce you to someone and not even concerned about who is it. They value you. After this, ask for money at a small level.

Go for the foundations or smaller grants and show you exist for at least one year.

How did you set up your team?

Find a balance between PhDs, policy experts, and staff. It is very important to have grant writers, coordinators and follows up with the others.

RESOURCES

<https://www.cippecc.org/en/home/>