Pathways to Impact: An International Study Of Advocates' Strategies And Needs

May 2024

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Background

Animal advocacy organizations employ diverse strategies to support farmed animals that range from individual action all the way up to large-scale national interventions. Advocates may choose to promote vegan foods to their community, found an animal sanctuary, lobby their governments for strong welfare laws, or petition meat companies to give more space to animals in confinement.

This diversity in tactics creates a need for impact evaluation—while much of the advocacy research measures the effectiveness of various approaches or develops related theories of change, less attention has been paid to understanding *why* organizations prefer certain strategies, decide to adopt new ones, or stick to what they know.

Using a survey of over 190 animal advocacy organizations in 84 countries and six small focus-group discussions, this study aims to understand the diverse approaches taken by farmed animal protection groups globally, focusing on how and why organizations choose to pursue these advocacy strategies.

Key Findings

1. **Animal advocacy organizations pursue strategies across five major categories, each focusing on a different type of stakeholder.** These are large-scale institutions (governments, large-scale food producers, retailers, etc.), local institutions (schools, restaurants, food producers, hospitals, etc.), individuals (through diet outreach or education), animals themselves (through direct work, such as sanctuaries), and other members of the advocacy movement (through movement support). Figure 2 in the full report provides more detail.

2. **Most organizations (55%) pursue more than one approach, and most advocates (63%) are interested in exploring at least one approach that they're not currently pursuing**. Notably, most organizations conducting direct work with animals (66%) or individual advocacy (91%) would consider trying out at least one type of institutional approach.

3. **Advocates are more open to considering policy advocacy than corporate advocacy, because it has fewer barriers to entry and less stigma.** Some advocates have negative associations with corporate advocacy, as it may involve engaging with organizations strongly misaligned with their values. Corporate advocacy may also

require a degree of professionalism and industry expertise that some forms of policy advocacy (e.g., petitions) do not.

4. **Organizations that conduct corporate and policy work tend to be larger organizations that conduct multiple forms of advocacy.** Organizations that focus on corporate and policy approaches are typically larger than those that focus on direct work and individual advocacy, which are sometimes volunteer-led. Larger organizations are also more likely to pursue multiple approaches simultaneously.

5. **Working with local institutions provides advocacy organizations with a stepping stone from individual to institutional approaches.** Local institutional approaches are often seen as a "sweet spot" for small advocacy organizations, offering a balance between scalability and tractability. These approaches are perceived as less resource-intensive than large-scale institutional approaches, and potentially offer an intermediate step for growing advocacy organizations who want to expand individual diet approaches to higher-leverage policy or corporate approaches, and are also compatible with more bottom-up theories of change.

6. **Deciding on organizational approaches is not just an internal process.** While an organization's mission and available resources are key considerations, external influences, ranging from large international partners and funders to other grassroots community members, also play a key role in advocates' decision-making process. Formal or informal research, including desk-based secondary research and primary/user research methods like message testing and stakeholder interviews, often informs this decision-making process.

7. **Diverse global contexts restrict the viability of existing advocacy approaches in ways that foreign funders may not understand or anticipate.** Local advocacy organizations may avoid certain advocacy approaches due to local political and cultural obstacles: for example, avoiding meat elimination messaging in favor of meat reduction or corporate advocacy in favor of political lobbying. Balancing the needs of the local context with the expectations of funders and parent organizations often limits the strategic choices of local advocates.

8. **Advocacy organizations may be more willing and able to expand on their existing approaches rather than branching into entirely new approaches**. Many advocates would prefer to scale up existing campaigns to cover additional geographies and species or adopt new media strategies to expand their existing individual messaging rather than adopt entirely new approaches.

9. **Funding is always front of mind for advocates.** Advocates indicate that funding is the most useful type of support, the most common barrier preventing organizations from

expanding to more ambitious approaches, and the greatest challenge for current advocacy work. Complex, competitive grantmaking procedures can also be a hindrance that limits the ability of an organization to focus on its work, and concerns about the sustainability of funding may prevent organizations from expanding and diversifying their approaches.

Recommendations

Recommendations For Funders

- **Create opportunities for knowledge exchange among grantees.** Advocates specifically wanted to learn from others working on similar approaches. Funders may be able to take advantage of having a diverse grantee portfolio to support mutual learning between these organizations, with the aim of improving and sharing current strategies, and transitioning to alternatives. As some advocates needed support adapting global approaches to local contexts, intra-regional or "South-South" cooperation between advocates in non-Western or lower-income countries may be particularly valuable.

- **Simplify funding applications and remove unnecessary steps.** Organizations are stressed by the time and effort required to complete complex grantmaking procedures for certain funders. Solutions include universal grant applications that can be used to apply to multiple funders at once (e.g., Granti), as well as providing multi-year funding commitments so that grantees don't have to spend extra time and resources to re-apply for funding each year. Resources exist to help funders simplify and streamline the process for applicants, which may help to reduce the administrative burden on animal advocates.

- **When suggesting new strategies to grantees or potential grantees, work with them to navigate the constraints and considerations they face.** Many advocates are interested in alternative approaches, but multiple factors *beyond* resource availability and impact influence decision-making. These include social or political constraints, mission alignment, and perceived tractability. Local advocates will generally have a stronger understanding of which of these challenges can be overcome than funders, but they may need financial or logistical support to navigate them and adopt new approaches.

Recommendations For Advocates

- **Larger organizations can develop and share blueprints of successful campaigns with groups in other regions.** Advocates often had to plan their campaigns, such as vegan challenges, from scratch. Instead, successful projects could be used to develop

blueprints that can be adapted by advocates globally. As a step in this direction, many organizations that focus on education or grassroots lobbying freely share their materials and guides (e.g., Institute for Humane Education; Plant-Based Treaty).

- **Investigate knowledge exchange opportunities with organizations pursuing similar approaches.** Seek opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange with organizations pursuing similar strategies to enhance effectiveness. For example, one advocate participant suggested co-developing a global calendar for vegan events, while others highlighted cooperating on local institutional approaches within regions.

- **Work with support organizations to explore institutional approaches.** Organizations that focus on movement support or capacity-building, such as incubators (e.g., Charity Entrepreneurship) and accelerators (e.g., Thrive Africa Accelerator), provide opportunities for individual advocates and small organizations to explore and pilot institutional approaches.

- **Aim for equitable international advocacy collaboration that prioritizes the knowledge and skills of local advocates.** When conducting advocacy outside your home country (e.g., for organizations with branches in multiple countries), key strategic and implementation roles should be held by local advocates. Not only does this retain power with those individuals most affected by the decisions, it also ensures that those with the greatest understanding of the cultural nuances are able to influence the creation of a positive impact for animals.

Recommendations For Researchers

- **Conduct case studies on successful transitions towards institutional approaches.** Investigate how some advocacy organizations transition from individual advocacy or direct work with animals to larger-scale institutional approaches. Whether they switch from one approach to the other or expand from one approach to both, understanding these pathways can inform future strategies for expanding our repertoire of approaches.

- **Investigate potential geographic or context-specific factors that influence the viability of institutional approaches.** Some institutional approaches seem to be more feasible in lower-income or non-Western countries, due to institutions having fewer barriers to entry. Additional research on this topic can help determine whether these approaches may have a higher impact in certain regions.

- **Consider partnering with smaller advocacy organizations to conduct useful applied research.** Many organizations are already doing some degree of research—often to better understand their target audience—but smaller, more funding-constrained organizations could greatly benefit from support from researchers to

do this more transparently or systematically. Researchers can help these organizations measure their impact and better convey their theory of change to funders. This may be a particularly impactful opportunity for early career researchers and organizations such as Vegan Thesis could be well-positioned to facilitate the matching process.

Applying These Findings

We understand that reports like this have a lot of information to consider and that acting on research can be challenging. Faunalytics is happy to offer pro bono support to advocates and nonprofit organizations who would like guidance applying these findings to their own work. Please visit our Office Hours or contact us for support.

Behind The Project

Research Team

The project's lead author was Jack Stennett (Good Growth). Other contributors to the design, data collection, analysis, and writing were: Jah Ying Chung (Good Growth), Dr. Andrea Polanco (Faunalytics), and Ella Wong (Good Growth). Dr. Jo Anderson (Faunalytics) reviewed and oversaw the work.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Tessa Graham, Craig Grant (Asia for Animals Coalition), and Kaho Nishibu (Animal Alliance Asia) for providing the impetus for this research and contributing to aspects of the design, as well as ProVeg and an anonymous funder for their generous support of this research. Finally, we thank our participants for their time and support of the project.

Research Terminology

At Faunalytics, we strive to make research accessible to everyone. We avoid jargon and technical terminology as much as possible in our reports. If you do encounter an unfamiliar term or phrase, check out the Faunalytics Glossary for user-friendly definitions and examples.

Research Ethics Statement

As with all of Faunalytics' original research, this study was conducted according to the standards outlined in our Research Ethics and Data Handling Policy.

Method

This section outlines the research questions, design, sampling techniques, data collection, and analysis methods used in this mixed methods observational study aimed at understanding global animal advocacy strategies. The study identifies the challenges faced by advocates, the factors influencing their strategic choices, and the resources that could support them in achieving their goals.

The quantitative stage of our study comprised a survey of advocates who held a decision-making role in a farmed animal advocacy organization. Our sample was taken from an internal list of advocates, covering multiple global regions and diverse advocacy approaches. We sent out 755 invitations and received 278 responses, giving a 37% response rate, and retained 197 after data cleaning (see Supplementary Materials for details).

Due to the global nature of the contact list, and the translation of the survey into multiple languages, we were able to survey respondents working in 84 countries (see Figure 1). Our survey sample included a wide range of organization sizes. Overall, 25% of organizations in our sample were either fully volunteer-led or received very limited funding for temporary or part-time staff. Another 46% of the organizations employed 1 to 5 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members, and the remaining 28% had staff sizes ranging from 6 to over 100 staff members.

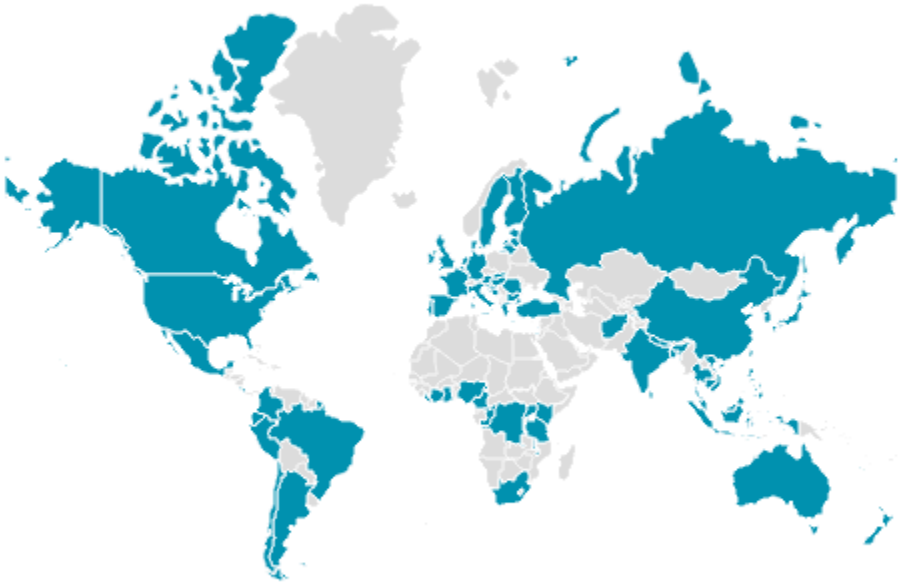
The survey identified their organization's focus, geographic scope, number of employees, budget, and advocacy approaches. Respondents were also asked to rate their satisfaction with their organization's current approaches to farmed animal advocacy, their interest in pursuing different approaches, the importance of different factors when choosing an approach, the obstacles faced in their advocacy, and the usefulness of different resources. We also asked open-ended questions about why advocates were dissatisfied with their approaches, and their reasons for not adopting other advocacy approaches.

The qualitative stage of the study was developed to acquire more in-depth information about the decision-making processes that lead organizations to choose particular advocacy approaches. We invited a small number of survey respondents (n = 20; 6 groups of 2-4 individuals) to take part in focus group discussions about their decision-making processes, challenges and obstacles, alternative approaches that they had considered and why they ultimately chose not to take these approaches. The focus groups concluded with a brief discussion of future plans.

Focus groups were divided according to participants' advocacy approach and geography. First they were split three ways: organizations that were currently conducting large-scale institutional approaches, organizations interested in exploring these approaches, and organizations that were less interested in these approaches. Within those categories, half of the focus groups were conducted with Western advocates, the other half with non-Western advocates.

See the *Supplementary Materials* section for more details on sample and data collection.

Figure 1: Map Of Participating Organizations



Analysis Method

To test multiple hypotheses with relation to our pre-registered quantitative research questions, we used chi-squared analysis, logistic regression, and Mann-Whitney U tests. To adjust the results for false discovery rate (FDR), we applied the Benjamini-Hochberg correction across the set of estimates for each question, which reduces the likelihood of getting a false positive result when conducting multiple tests.

Throughout the report we include only a limited number of p-values indicating statistical significance. Due to our sample size being slightly lower than we planned for in our power calculations, our quantitative analysis was underpowered. Consequently, many of our pre-registered findings did not achieve conventional significance levels, so results where

p-values are not specified should be treated as tentative. For more details, see the *Caveats and Limitations* section.

To supplement our quantitative findings, and provide more in-depth, contextualised insights into the research questions, we held focus group discussions with advocates. To inform the group selection for the qualitative stage of research, we conducted clustering analysis using K-modes, an unsupervised learning algorithm that organizes data points into groups. This led us to the set of six focus groups described above.

Discussion transcripts were coded to identify themes, and these themes were grouped together by research question using a digital collaboration platform to identify common patterns and trends.

See the *Supplementary Materials* section for more details on the quantitative and qualitative analysis processes.

Movement-Level Insights

This section will provide an overview of the current state of the global farmed animal advocacy movement. It will cover what approaches are currently being pursued, satisfaction levels with current approaches, challenges faced by advocates, barriers to adopting new approaches, how they think about adopting new approaches, and how strategy decisions are made. This overview aims to give readers some broad insights into the kinds of farmed animal advocacy being conducted across the world.

This will be followed by a section with approach-specific insights, which will explore these issues in detail for each specific type of advocacy. It will provide information for advocates and funders interested in exploring the distinctive characteristics of specific approaches or looking to understand why certain advocates choose to pursue, or not pursue, these approaches.

Current Advocacy Approaches

Categories Of Approaches

Based on our analysis of open-ended survey responses and focus groups discussions, we identified five major categories of advocacy approaches, based primarily on the target audience or stakeholders of each.

Individual approaches attempt to influence the diet or beliefs of individuals directly. These include grassroots education and awareness**,** diet campaigns or challenges similar to “Veganuary,” and events**,** such as festivals, conferences and exhibitions. It also includes media

production**,** such as producing vegan-themed shows on traditional TV media, short videos on social media, advertising, and podcasts. This also includes various individual approaches that support those following a plant-based diet, such as providing dietary advice, or recipes. Other types of activism for farmed animals, such as street protests or vigils, are also counted in this category.

Local institutional approaches focus on working with small-scale institutions, often those that involve education or that distribute or produce food (farms, restaurants, hospitals, religious institutions, or prisons). Direct education or increasing accessibility to plant-based foods at educational institutions were common examples of this kind of approach, as was working directly with food producers (e.g., farmers and fishers). Another form of engagement involves working with businesses and restaurants to incorporate plant-based or higher-welfare menu options. Note that there may be some overlap with large-scale institutional approaches (e.g., a policy mandating vegan options in schools) and certain individual approaches.

Large-scale institutional approaches involve working with policymakers, members of large national or multinational corporations, or other institutional figures. These large-scale institutional approaches generally operate at a state, national or international level, where advocates work with institutions with significant power, whether financial or political, at their disposal. Engaging with policy institutions could involve lobbying or direct influence, or less direct forms of engagement, such as petitions or referendum campaigns. Engaging with corporate actors involves certification schemes, cage-free welfare standards, or promoting vegan/vegetarian alternatives. In our survey, large-scale institutional approaches were divided into policy and corporate approaches.

Direct work with animals often entails running an animal sanctuary, sometimes in combination with animal rescue or veterinary services, including specific approaches such as population control, or spay/neuter/release.

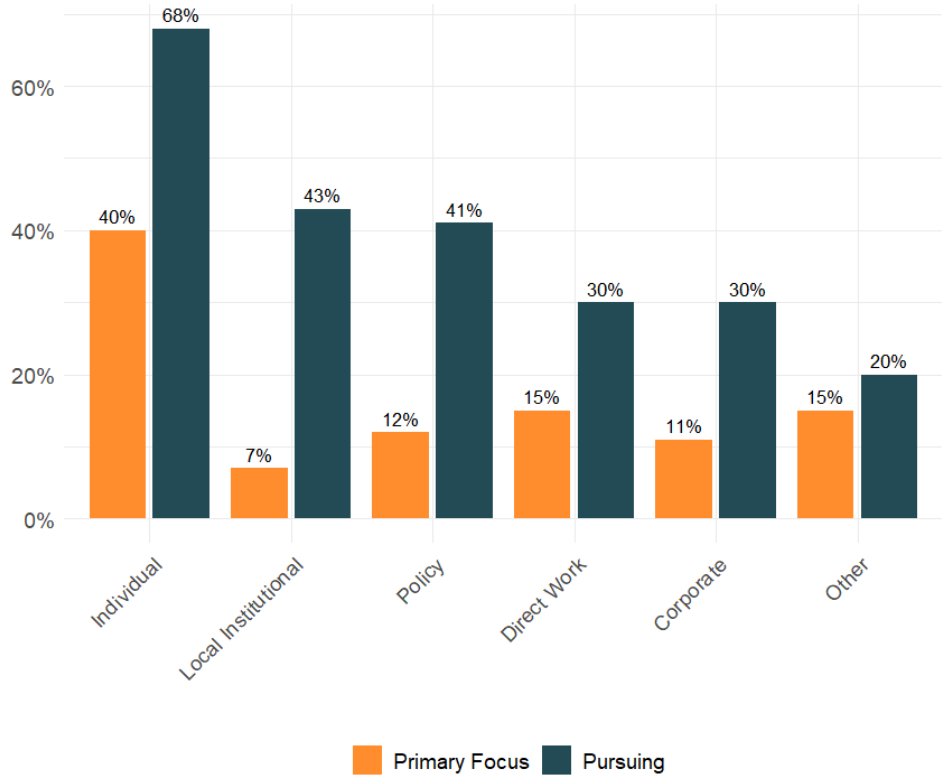
Other approaches primarily involved movement support to uplift advocates or vegans, aiming to help farmed animals indirectly. Central categories include movement building (growing the size of the movement) and capacity building (improving the skills or capabilities of advocacy organizations). This includes activities focused on collaboration and networking**,** to connect farmed animal advocates to other advocates and related communities. Research was also frequently mentioned as a way of supporting the advocate community.

Frequency Of Approaches

Organizations working on farmed animal advocacy across the world employ a variety of approaches to have an impact on animals. While the majority of groups (59%) pursued multiple approaches, individual approaches were the most commonly practiced. We asked advocates to

select which approaches they pursued, and which single approach they considered their primary focus—illustrated in the following chart.

Figure 2: Percentage of Organizations Pursuing and Focusing On Different Advocacy Approaches



When we look at the primary focus of organizations, individual advocacy was still by far the most common focus area (40%). While 43% of organizations did some local institutional work, it was only the main focus of a small proportion of organizations (7%).

We also observed that organizations focusing on corporate campaigns tended to be larger than other organizations in the sample, with 59% employing at least 6 FTE staff members, and none with fewer than one FTE staff member. By contrast, many organizations focused on individual advocacy (38%) or direct work with animals (30%) had under one FTE equivalent staff member, suggesting that they were either fully volunteer-led, or only hired temporary or part-time staff.

Unsurprisingly, organizations that practiced multiple approaches tended to be larger than those that practiced a single approach. Larger organizations were more likely to focus on higher-level institutional approaches, corporate campaigns in particular, which they often conducted alongside other approaches. Smaller organizations in our sample were more likely to focus on a

single cause area - usually those with fewer barriers to entry such as individual advocacy, local institutional advocacy, or direct work with animals.

We also asked respondents to specify the types of advocacy that they conducted within these categories, as shown in the following table:

Table 1: Percentage Of Organizations Pursuing Specific Approaches Within Broader Categories

Strategy	Percent
Individual Advocacy	
Community events or workshops	69%
Online campaigns	65%
In-person advocacy	47%
Local Institutional Advocacy	
Educating students and teachers	79%
Working in hospitals to increase plant-based, or higher welfare options	21%
Working in prisons to increase plant-based, or higher welfare options	21%
Large Scale Institutional: Policy Advocacy	
Welfare-related legislation (other than cage-free or crate-free)	74%
Cage-free or crate-free legislation	50%
Plant-based product labelling	28%
Meat labelling	16%
Large Scale Institutional: Corporate Advocacy	
Campaigns to increase vegan or vegetarian options at businesses	64%
Campaigns for producers and companies to go cage or crate-free	59%
Campaigns for businesses to conduct ethical sourcing of other animal products	52%
Movement Support And Other Approaches	
Movement building, capacity building or other direct support	29%
Research and dissemination	18%
Vegan events, media, and public relations	13%

Satisfaction With Approaches

Our survey asked advocates for their level of satisfaction with their current approach(es). Those pursuing multiple approaches were asked about each approach separately.

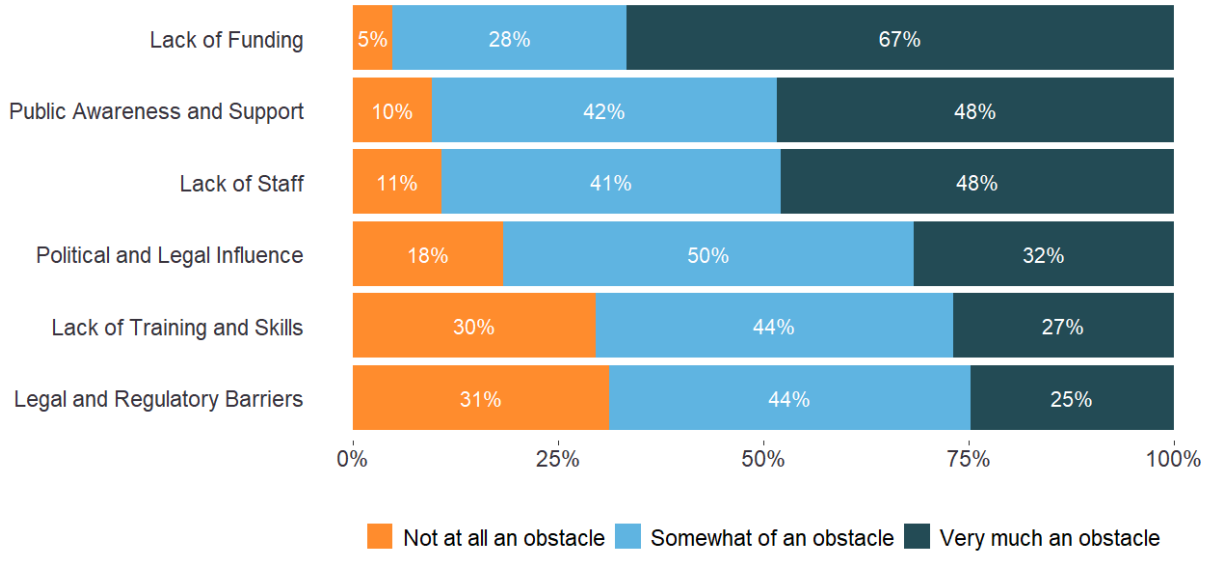
On average across all advocacy approaches, 39% of respondents were very satisfied with their approach, 34% were somewhat satisfied, while only 12% were somewhat, or very dissatisfied.

Larger organizations tended to be more satisfied with their current approaches than smaller organizations. This was a strong trend, with only 3% of responses from organizations with more than 5 FTE staff members across the survey responding that they were dissatisfied with their current approaches, compared to 18% of responses from organizations with under 5 FTE staff members.

Current Challenges And Preferred Support

In this section, we explore the challenges advocates face and the types of solutions and support that they feel could help their organizations overcome those challenges and create greater impact. The figures below provide an overview of challenges and types of support based on survey responses. Following that, we expand on those challenges and types of support using detailed data from the focus groups.

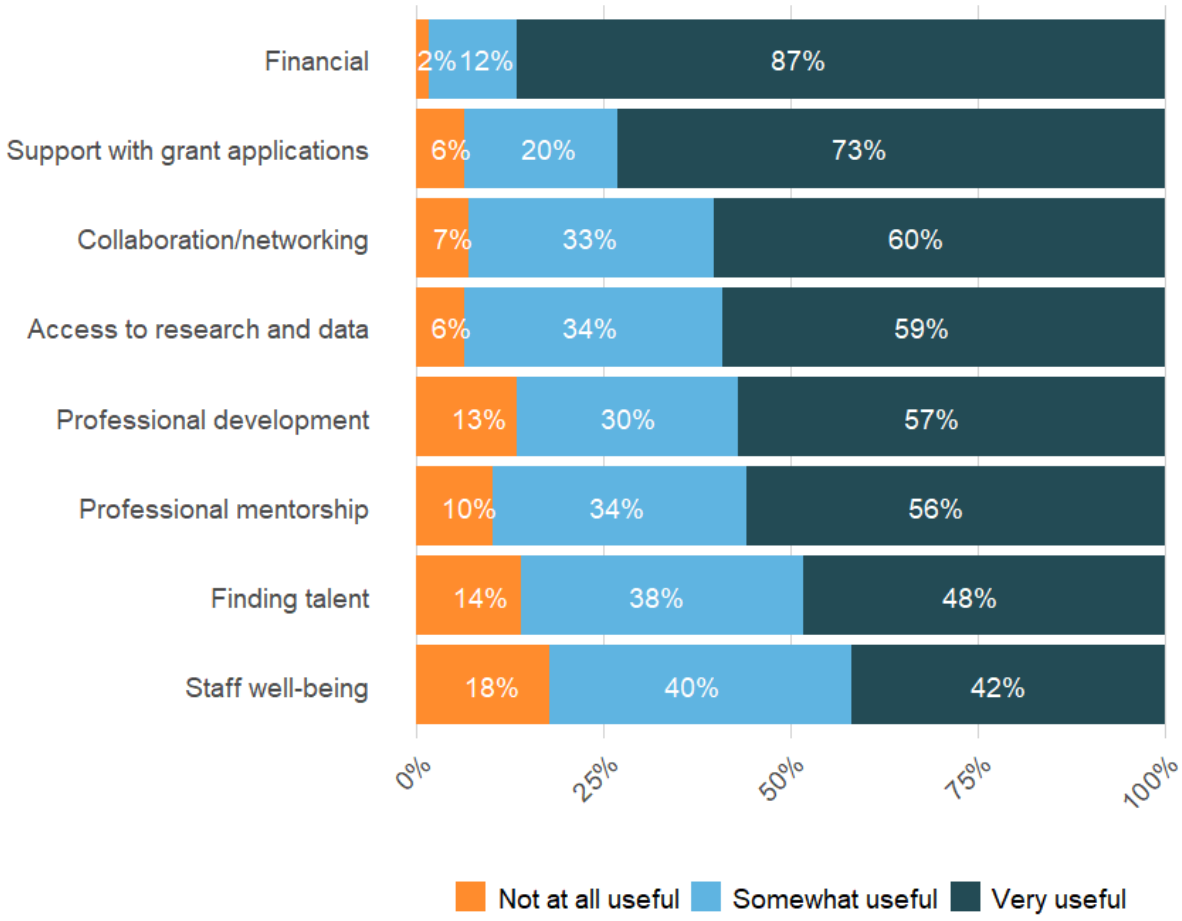
Figure 3: Perceptions of Challenges Faced By Advocates



As shown in Figure 3, lack of funding is the biggest challenge, with 95% of respondents reporting that it is an obstacle to some extent. This is followed by lack of public awareness and

support for their mission, (90%), and lack of staff (89%). The majority of respondents also reported that legal and regulatory barriers, limited opportunities to influence political or legal figures, and lack of training or skills were somewhat of an obstacle.

Figure 4: Usefulness Of Different Types Of Support



In parallel, almost all advocates also perceived financial resources as either very useful (87%) or somewhat useful (12%). Similarly, support with grant applications was seen as either very useful (73%) or somewhat useful (20%) by the vast majority of respondents. While the majority of advocates rated most types of support as somewhat or very useful, support with improving staff well-being and finding talent were seen as significantly less useful than the other options (*p*s < 0.05).

The biggest challenges and supports flagged in the survey tended to also come up in focus group discussions and open-ended responses. Context from those discussions of these key challenges is provided in the subsequent sections, while the others are described in more detail in *Approach-Specific Insights*.

Discussion Of Funding Challenges

Aligning with the survey, funding challenges were a key theme that emerged from the focus group discussions. Advocates expressed a number of concerns and offered potential solutions.

Some concerns related to the processes associated with getting funding. Grant applications were seen as time-consuming and often unproductive, with some organizations having to go through multiple lengthy grant-making procedures to fund the same project(s) with low success rates. For example, one advocate said:

> *I spent so much of last year grant writing that I didn't get a third of what I usually get done in a year … because I was dealing with applications and grant writing … I applied for over $100,000 worth of grants … I think we got about $2,000 out of all that.*

Other advocates raised issues around how funding practices affect organizational sustainability. The fact that grants are often short-term or non-renewable means that many organizations feel unable to make longer-term plans. Financial concerns spurred certain organizations to commit a lot of their time to fundraising, or to explore the availability of alternative sources of funding, such as advertising or commercialization.

> *Most of our activities now are around funding: either fundraising or taking on projects that will make us money because we don't have money and we can't work without money.*

To address funding challenges, some advocates suggested leveraging government funding (e.g., getting government health funding to support plant-based messaging) or commercializing operations (e.g., adding "Airbnb" services to sanctuaries for revenue generation). Others believed that alternative mechanisms for grant-making, such as longer-term grants and those with simpler procedures, could reduce the administrative burden. One advocate highlighted trust-based philanthropy (Faella and Robinson, 2024), with less strict reporting requirements, as a solution.

Discussion Of Low Public Awareness And Support

Advocates faced challenges related to negative perceptions of some or all of the animal advocacy movement, and a lack of awareness about certain issues. One Asian advocate

believed that “using the V-word [vegan] instantly discredits us/our mission in the eyes of the general public,” while another mentioned an “anti-vegan wave” in Australia post-COVID.

There are also concerns that the idea of animal advocacy is seen as new or unpopular in some regions. This is particularly the case in regions without an established advocacy movement, such as Latin America, Africa, and some parts of Asia:

> *There is an absence of animal welfare organizations in the rural areas, and [it’s a pity] ... that the concept of animal welfare does not even exist in most of … rural [South Asian country].*

One suggested solution to public awareness issues was support with improving social media outreach. Multiple advocates discussed using social media as an impact-multiplier and a way of impacting public opinion at scale; however, this was frequently seen as a challenging tactic. One advocate mentioned targeted social media training as a potential solution, while another suggested knowledge transfer through developing blueprints of successful social media campaigns.

Discussion Of Staffing And Professional Support Challenges

Some organizations had specific issues with hiring staff who had the appropriate understanding, training, or skills for their work. As a result, organizations experienced staff-related constraints connected to time or personal bandwidth. For example, one participant in a focus group mentioned experiencing burnout due to a high workload, and difficulty hiring others to share this workload.

Professional development and mentorship were proposed as useful forms of support that could address staffing challenges. Specific suggestions included in-depth training on corporate communications to support corporate work, as well as the translation of various existing training programs into neglected languages (such as Nepali and Mandarin).

Discussion Of Need For Collaboration, Networking, And Access To Research Data

One advocate highlighted collaborations between organizations working on diet challenges in different countries, and creating blueprints of organizations or approaches for more effective work to avoid “reinventing the wheel.” Another noted that research into diet choices in their country would make their individual advocacy more effective.

As we will discuss in the following section, impact and effectiveness were frequently discussed as a concern amongst advocates—some who see their current work as ineffective, others who are eager to expand and achieve more impact. Facilitating improved collaboration, networking,

and access to research data may present a solution to effectiveness concerns by providing access to knowledge and insights on what is effective.

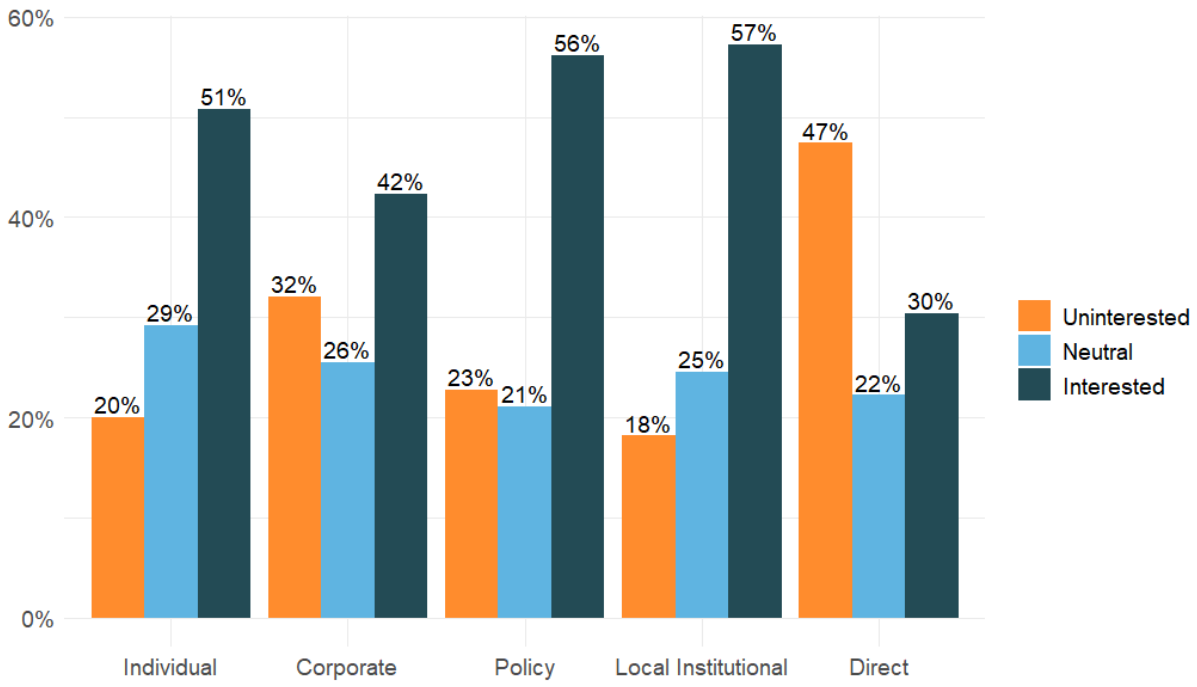
Exploring Alternative Approaches

In addition to current approaches and challenges, we also asked advocates in the survey and the focus groups how interested they were in pursuing alternative approaches, and what considerations and constraints affected their decisions whether to pursue these approaches or not. We also attempted to understand the pathways that led them to adopt alternative approaches.

Interest In Other Approaches

This figure shows survey respondents' level of interest in pursuing an advocacy approach other than what their organizations were already pursuing.

Figure 5: Interest in Alternative Approaches



Most survey respondents had some interest in pursuing at least one alternative approach. The largest proportion of advocates were interested in local institutional (57%) and policy approaches (56%). They were least interested in expanding into direct work with animals (30%).

Many focus group participants showed interest in adopting new approaches, particularly in a hypothetical scenario where they were granted sufficient resources to pursue them. Specifically, we asked them to imagine that they were given $100,000 USD to pursue more impactful approaches, and asked them how they would spend this money.

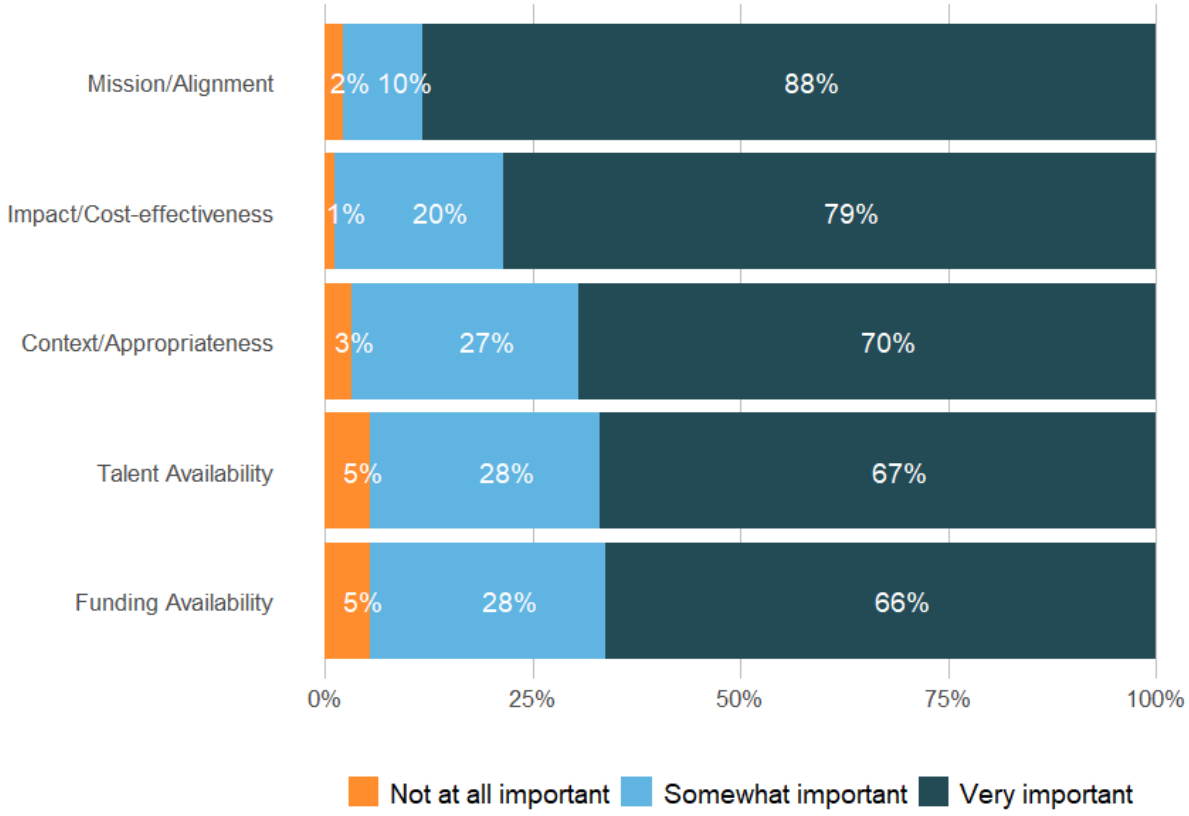
Advocates were most interested in approaches that were the most related to their current work. For example, one advocate whose current work focuses on individual advocacy (online vegan campaigns) was interested in considering a policy-related approach to leverage government healthcare funding to support vegan advocacy. Another organization that currently focuses on education at a local institutional level was interested in producing content and engaging policymakers in order to formally integrate animal welfare into the national curriculum. Participants were also interested in connecting their current approaches with other related advocacy movements, such as working with environmental advocates or healthcare professionals to expand the scope of plant-based diet campaigning.

We should note, however, that some advocates were more interested in expanding current approaches as opposed to branching into entirely new areas, for example, broadening existing campaigns to cover additional geographies or species. One organization mentioned their interest in extending a certification campaign to additional aquatic species, while a sanctuary discussed broadening their area of work from the welfare of farm animals to the welfare of working and wild animals. Other examples of expanding existing approaches were more tactical, such as professionalizing or hiring in a given area, or adopting media or social media approaches to reach a wider audience with their message.

Considerations And Constraints

Advocates consider a number of factors when deciding on which advocacy approaches to pursue, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 6: Importance Of Factors When Choosing Advocacy Approaches



Alignment with the organization's mission or values was considered "very important" by the highest proportion of advocates (88%), followed by the impact or cost-effectiveness of their chosen approach (78%). Additional important factors included local context and appropriateness of the advocacy approach (with respect to political environment, public opinion, culture, etc.) and the availability of talent and funding.

From advocate's open-ended survey responses and the focus group discussions, we discovered that these factors can act as both an impetus and barrier for pursuing alternative approaches.

Value or mission alignment can often act as a barrier to pursuing alternative approaches if they are perceived to conflict with or compromise the organization's mission. As the most common example, when we asked survey respondents why they were not pursuing corporate campaigns, some groups referred to their commitment to abolitionism and an end to speciesism.

Impact was frequently mentioned as a consideration in choosing an advocacy approach, but was associated with different meanings and concepts. Cost-effectiveness was commonly

referenced, sometimes using specific indicators, such as animals helped or sign-ups to a vegan campaign. Impact was sometimes framed in terms of the scale and neglectedness of a problem—one advocate focused on aquatic animals because “the numbers are overwhelming” and because “aquatic animal welfare … has been neglected in the movement for a long time.” Other cases of neglectedness referred to individual countries: for instance, when there was no work on EU policy currently being pursued in a particular country. Measurability and immediacy of impact were also impact-related considerations.

The context and appropriateness of approaches or interventions were also frequently mentioned. In fact, in the open-ended responses, appropriateness was the most common reason cited when we asked why respondents were not interested in a specific alternative approach. Some advocates framed appropriateness in terms of convenience and tractability. Convenience relates to the low cost and effort needed to adopt an approach, favoring methods that avoid extensive training, complex stakeholder engagement, or political challenges. Tractability involves choosing methods that are likely to achieve incremental progress toward animal-related goals, rather than riskier strategies that aim for more ambitious, albeit less certain, outcomes.

In certain countries or regions, the political and legal environment restricted the scope for institutional advocacy due to limited access to policymakers, institutions resistant to influence, inadequate enforcement of existing laws, and the ability of individual policymakers or business interests to easily obstruct the efforts of animal advocates. This was particularly true in regions without a mature advocacy movement, such as Southeast Asia and South America. In other cases, the political environment may provide opportunities. For example, the absence of animal welfare legislation in one country inspired one advocate to transition from direct work with animals to policy lobbying.

Availability of funding and talent also affected the choice of advocacy approach. For example, one advocate said that “most of the things we do are driven by what is fundable and what we can get financial support for.” Another advocate whose work focuses on small-bodied aquatic animals noted the increased availability of funding for Effective Altruism-aligned, welfare-based causes, which is a funding trend that is seen as an obstacle by some rights-focused groups. Alongside time and energy, these resource constraints were the most commonly mentioned barrier by survey respondents who were interested but not pursuing an alternative advocacy approach.

While we explicitly explored the influence of funding and funders, we observed that other external actors also influenced advocates’ choice of approaches. Advocates working as local representatives of international or regional organizations might have less freedom to adopt alternative approaches, where certain external guidelines or recommendations needed to be

followed. For example, in one Asian country, a Western organization recommended focusing exclusively on vegan advocacy rather than meat reduction, which the local representative did not fully adopt, as it felt unrealistic or intractable for their context.

Movement-support organizations also play a role here. For instance, an African advocate's strategies were influenced by a regional capacity-building organization with branches in multiple African countries. With guidance from this organization, this advocate piloted new approaches in their country and implemented approaches that have been piloted elsewhere, while feeling able to make important strategic decisions locally.

Adopting Alternative Approaches

Organizations follow different pathways when adopting alternative approaches. Typically, advocates start with individual approaches or direct work, then may scale up to local institutional approaches, and then only move to large-scale institutional approaches when they have developed the capacity to do so. However, some organizations are able to bypass certain stages or adopt institutional approaches directly.

Some advocates transitioned or expanded their work from individual approaches or direct work with animals to institutional advocacy. One South Asian advocate described her organization's process, moving from direct work with companion animals, to direct work with farmed animals, to local institutional advocacy, to large-scale institutional advocacy. While continuing to operate a sanctuary with farmed and companion animals, this organization now advocates for improved animal welfare legislation and dairy farm welfare standards:

> *We … broadened our area of work from rescue and rehabilitation of the community dogs to the farm animals … to involvement in policy change … we have been stepping each and every step from micro to macro levels.*

Similarly, a European advocate transitioned from an individual approach (blogging and sharing online recipes) to a broad range of media and domestic and EU-level policy interventions. Additionally, one Southeast Asian organization that had been working with farmers on welfare-related projects expanded their work to include a corporate-based intervention.

Advocates mentioned different factors that enabled their transition. One advocate highlighted that additional funding allowed them to explore different, more effective approaches. Another described the scaling of their approaches as an organic extension of involving local government in their local community activities. A Southeast Asian advocate described their expansion to a corporate approach as opportunistic—a chance meeting at an international industry conference led to a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with a retailer for a welfare improvement program, paving the way for the organization to pursue a corporate engagement strategy alongside their work with producers.

Additionally, the advocacy landscape in a country may have an effect on whether organizations choose to expand to large scale institutional approaches. Individual- or direct work-focused advocates from smaller countries with fewer animal advocacy organizations may feel both the need and the opportunity to fill the niche for policy work in their country, as was the case for the South Asian and European advocates mentioned above, whereas there appears to be a clearer division of labor in countries with more advanced movements.

While some organizations undergo a gradual expansion process, influenced by funding and opportunities, other organizations are able to accelerate or even bypass this process. For example, regional capacity-building organizations can enable local advocates to move directly into exploring local institutional approaches, either bypassing or more quickly transitioning from individual approaches. In the African examples, piloting various institutional approaches in multiple countries allows local advocates to explore these approaches in a context-relevant way. Similarly, two organizations that had been part of an incubation program worked on institutional approaches from their inception, completely bypassing individual, direct work or local institutional approaches. It is likely that these organizations received more access to resources and expertise through the incubator, which better allowed them to work directly with large-scale institutions.

Approach-Specific Insights

This section provides a more nuanced understanding of challenges, decision-making, barriers, and resources for different categories of animal advocacy approach. It can also inform funders or capacity-builders who want to support a given approach, as well as groups pursuing or thinking about pursuing particular approaches.

This section will be divided into the five major categories of advocacy we identified, based on their primary stakeholders:

- **Individual advocacy**: mainly campaigns aimed at changing personal diets via grassroots education, media, or event initiatives.
- **Local institutional approaches**: primarily engagement with local entities like schools and restaurants to improve plant-based food offerings and provide education.
- **Large-scale institutional approaches:** includes collaborations with policymakers and corporate leaders on national or international levels, using lobbying, petitions, or certification schemes.
- **Direct work with animals**: mainly involves animal sanctuaries and direct interventions like veterinary work with farmed animals.
- **Movement support approaches**: focuses on networking, collaboration, and research within animal advocacy movements.

For each advocacy approach covered below, the *Overview* section presents trends that were identified via statistical testing. As noted previously, the analysis was underpowered due to a smaller sample than anticipated, so trends described were not statistically significant after adjusting for multiple testing unless otherwise specified, and should therefore be understood as tentative. For more details, see the *Quantitative Analysis* section of the *Supplementary Materials*.

Individual Advocacy

Overview

Individual advocacy was the most commonly practiced type of advocacy in our survey. It mainly comprised campaigns aimed at changing personal diets via grassroots education, media, and event initiatives. 68% of survey respondents conducted this kind of advocacy, with 40% focusing on this approach.

Organizations that focus on individual advocacy tended to be smaller than those practicing large-scale institutional approaches. 38% of those focusing on diet advocacy had under one FTE staff member, and 82% had under five FTE staff members. These organizations were more likely than others to be rights-focused or to have a mixed mission, and significantly less likely ($ps < 0.05$) to describe themselves as welfarist.

Why Groups Pursue This Approach

Individual advocacy is strongly connected to bottom-up theories of change: influencing individuals at a grassroots level in order to achieve broader cultural or societal changes that generate more positive outcomes for animals. Many advocates believe that only through changing individual minds and getting individuals to change their system of beliefs or values, can advocates create substantial or sustainable change. Other advocates expressed a more philosophical framing of this idea, using the concept of moral circle expansion, arguing that they want to expand “compassion to all living beings, not just to human beings.”

Individual approaches are also seen as having an impact through broadening public support for plant-based diets and animal causes. For example, one organization focused on mass media for a general audience, while others focused on specific demographics to drive cultural change, such as influencing “shopping habits and culture” in middle-aged women.

Many of the advocates we interviewed were vegans, and brought a deeply personal dimension to their advocacy efforts, especially among those who founded small organizations. A filmmaker adopted a vegan diet “... like everybody else. I did the vegan thing and I got all super excited,” which led them to found a one-person organization that targeted individuals to adopt veganism. One new mother who founded a small organization focused on supporting vegan parents with

providing vegan nutrition to their children described her “own very personal motivation after having children and finding difficulties in this myself.”

There are a variety of options that allow individual approaches to be scaled up without significant institutional obstacles through media, events, or online challenges. For one organization, conducting a plant-based diet challenge and a vegan cooking show were the “areas of least resistance to push forward the message,” and many other advocates indicated that various individual advocacy approaches were simpler and convenient options, with fewer barriers to entry.

Some individual-focused advocates emphasized impact metrics and tangible past successes that encouraged them to continue. One organization conducting a meat-free challenge collected survey data showing significant meat reduction across a wide population, which encouraged them to continue pursuing and building on this approach. An advocate focused on big public events believed that “this really works and people go vegan in our events.”

Overall, individual advocacy appears to be a relatively approachable strategy that aligns with the beliefs of many vegans and animal advocates. It often functions as a starting point for advocates who will later branch into alternative strategies.

Why Groups Don’t Pursue This Approach

Advocates who choose to avoid or move away from individual advocacy approaches, often do so due to differing theories of change, beliefs regarding impact, specific local issues, or challenges within the advocacy movement.

Some advocates, particularly those working on a large-scale institutional level, adhere to a top-down theory of change and don’t believe that targeting individuals can have a significant impact. Lack of impact is often attributed to difficulty in getting people to change their diets or getting public support for diet change. One advocate noted that: “Dietary change is not easy or as readily accessible for everyone.” Some advocates discussed context-specific challenges with individual advocacy. For instance:

> *In Indonesia, food politics are very sensitive issues to talk about. Vegan[s are] seen as elitist and vegan advocacy [is] sometimes seen as harmful to lower class society.*

Additionally, individual approaches were seen by some advocates as less measurable and direct in terms of impacting animals. For instance, public awareness-raising strategies were considered by one advocate, but not pursued, as they were seen as less measurable and impactful than engaging farmers and corporate actors.

Advocates who concentrate on institutional strategies may be opposed to vegan advocacy in particular, as they want to distance their work from more absolutist and radical forms of activism.

It can be a challenge for those conducting individual advocacy focused on non-vegan approaches to navigate their position in the broader movement:

> *Promoting high-welfare meat and also encouraging people to try meat-free products is a tightrope that, at times, earns the ire of either the meat industry or vegan activists depending on the issues raging at a given point in time.*

Resources To Support This Approach

Specific resources that could aid individual advocacy include **knowledge sharing**, **research**, and **funding**.

Knowledge sharing can occur through multiple contexts, and one advocate believed that there were potential benefits to creating "blueprints" for certain dietary approaches:

> *If I'm doing … [a] meat-free week, I have experience in doing a week challenge. If … [and] someone from another part of the world can communicate and say, "How are you doing this? Do you have a blueprint that I can copy in Cyprus, I can copy in Fiji?" Basically, it's knowledge sharing … because if I've done it, part of the principles of educating people is that you don't repeat other people's mistakes.*

This participant emphasized that "experiential learning" (i.e. learning by doing) should be combined with structured learning from other, more established organizations to share innovative ideas and sidestep common pitfalls experienced by newcomers to the field.

The significance of local research was highlighted, with a focus on the need for a deeper understanding of regional dietary habits to enhance the effectiveness of advocacy. As one participant pointed out, the lack of data on local food practices is a primary cause of dissatisfaction with current approaches:

> *Ground level understanding of the food habits of the region is poorly researched. If they were properly propagated through [well] researched data, vegan advocacy and education campaigns would be more impactful.*

An advocate who previously engaged in street-level advocacy was able to significantly increase their impact by transitioning to an online vegetarian challenge, facilitated by new funding. This shift from street advocacy to digital activities demonstrates how funding can act as a catalyst, enabling individual advocacy efforts to become more scalable and reach a broader audience.

Local Institutional Approaches

Overview

In our survey, 43% of organizations reported conducting local institutional advocacy, such as working in schools, hospitals, prisons, on student and faculty outreach, religious institutions, as

well as hotels, hostels, restaurants, and coffee bars. However, only 9% focused *primarily* on these approaches, indicating that they are more commonly a secondary part of an organization's strategy.

It is relatively common for organizations focused on diet or policy work to also pursue local institutional approaches. These approaches also appear to be more common in non-Western countries—47% of non-Western groups conducted institutional advocacy, while only 26% of Western groups did—a difference that was marginally significant (ps < 0.06) in our inferential analysis.

Why Groups Pursue This Approach

Local institutional approaches are connected with both top-down and bottom-up theories of change. Some advocates believed that they could achieve broader change through more institutionalized education approaches rather than targeting individuals directly. For instance, one advocate highlighted the benefits of delivering vegan and plant-based farming education programs within formal educational settings. This approach allowed their organization to reach a larger audience in a more sustainable manner compared to the "scattered model" of educating individuals in non-institutional settings. Another advocate noted the importance of working within schools and universities to "[change] the food culture," thereby influencing larger groups and embedding lasting changes in dietary habits.

Working with local institutions is often seen as a "sweet spot" for advocacy, offering a balance between scalability and tractability. Advocates mentioned that working with schools and restaurants allowed them to impact a greater number of people than individual advocacy, while also avoiding the challenges and obstacles of engaging large corporate and government entities. This was illustrated by one Asian advocate who wanted initially to work on education policy. Local institutional approaches allowed the advocate to achieve a similar effect more directly, and with fewer bureaucratic obstacles:

> *We actually wanted to … establish a curriculum of animal welfare in the education system. But unfortunately, we were not able to do that due to … political instability and because it is very difficult to reach … the core committee of the executive board of the country. So, that is why we ran a program through which we could get into each and every school, and we switched … to … extracurricular activities.*

Resources also play a role in these considerations. One advocate noted that these approaches "offer a unique opportunity to talk to many persons with a small budget," while another noted that they did not need to pay for expensive travel to their capital city for work with local institutions.

Another common motivation for working with local institutions is the idea of intersectional or cross-cause-area considerations. For instance, two African advocates mentioned that working on plant-based school feeding programs and community training for plant-based farming could simultaneously improve poverty, environmental, and health issues. One participant also mentioned collaborating with health centers to provide vegan options on restaurant menus, involving different local institutions to achieve health- and animal-related goals.

In focus group discussions, many advocates supported a mixed theory of change in which diet change requires both supply-side and demand-side interventions to be effective: in other words, both changing food offerings and influencing individual consumption behavior. Individual advocates often found there weren't enough appealing plant-based alternatives to offer as choices. In this situation, engaging local institutions such as restaurants, schools, and supermarkets to improve the supply of plant-based or vegan alternatives in their community may make it easier for individuals to transition to a plant-based lifestyle.

Why Groups Don't Pursue This Approach

Difficulties with local institutional approaches cause some groups to decide not to pursue, or stop pursuing, institutional approaches. Among those considering these approaches, there were certain context-specific difficulties in influencing local institutions sustainably, for example, where offering plant-based alternatives is not seen as necessary or commercially viable:

> *… when we try to approach different restaurants or different supermarkets to add more vegan or plant-based options … they don't have any incentive or … motivation to offer these plant-based options.*

Among those who decided not to pursue this approach, resources and context-specific limitations were key barriers. Some survey respondents noted that their institutional and policy environment was unsuitable for their desired institutional interventions. For example, one advocate noted that subsidy-related policies in school represented a major obstacle towards shifting menu composition towards plant-based options.

With certain types of local institutions, such as schools, an advocate or organization's mission or positioning can also be a limitation. One advocate working on environmental education noted that they needed to remain "neutral" with regards to animal-based causes and veganism, suggesting that adopting such a stance avoids potential tensions with local institutions, who may be more opposed to explicit vegan advocacy. Similarly, a corporate-focused advocate noted that conducting institutional campaigns in schools might affect their relationship with food industry actors, contradicting their organization's image as a professional, corporate service provider.

As our survey found local institutional approaches to be more common in non-Western than Western countries, it is possible that these approaches may sometimes be more tractable in lower-income countries. Schools in lower-income countries may be part of less centralized

and/or politicized education systems, while food production systems are also less centralized and subsidized. As a result there may be more leverage points, including some with fewer bureaucratic obstacles and greater openness to grassroots initiatives.

Overall, local institutional approaches seem to be perceived as less resource-intensive than large-scale institutional approaches focusing on policy or corporate campaigns. They potentially offer an intermediate step for growing advocacy organizations who want to expand individual diet approaches to higher-leverage policy approaches, and are also compatible with more bottom-up theories of change.

Resources To Support This Approach

Alongside funding resources, support with networking and capacity-building were also mentioned as potential resources to support groups who focused on these approaches. One advocate suggested a concrete way to facilitate knowledge-sharing and partnerships:

> *I think if we had this calendar of events that we could all get behind and support those that are aligned with our strategy or our mission, et cetera, I think that would be really good. I see the knowledge sharing and partnerships.*

It is possible that local institutional approaches have greater variation between countries or global regions, indicating that this could be an area where support from economically or politically similar countries (South-South cooperation) could provide additional value in terms of knowledge transfer.

Large-Scale Institutional Approaches

Overview

Many advocates pursued large-scale institutional advocacy, such as collaborations with policymakers and corporate leaders on national or international levels, using lobbying, petitions, or certification schemes. 30% and 41% of advocates in our study pursued corporate and policy advocacy, respectively, but these approaches were only the primary focus for 11% and 12% of advocates, for corporate and policy advocacy respectively. Local institutional, policy, and corporate responses were correlated, with over 60% of organizations that practice one of these three also practicing another.

On average, organizations that pursue large-scale institutional approaches, especially those that primarily focus on them, tended to be larger than other surveyed organizations. However, we found an exception in small countries or where the animal advocacy movement is new, small, or less professionalized, where some smaller organizations worked on national policy.

Why Groups Pursue This Approach

Advocates who currently pursue large-scale institutional approaches generally believe that they are more impactful or effective than individual approaches—helping more animals for a lower cost, in a way that aligns with a top-down theory of change. For example, corporate commitments can affect all of the animals in a company's supply chain, while improved welfare laws can create positive impacts for *all* farmed animals in a region or country. One organization pursued corporate and farmer engagement because their "main priority is in terms of impact, namely, the number of animals that we can help and cost-effectiveness, which is the number of animals that we can help per dollar of resources." Another organization adopted large-scale approaches because they believed that corporate and legislative stakeholders "might have the greatest impact in the aquaculture/fisheries space."

Motivations to pursue large-scale institutional advocacy approaches may be inspired by what is perceived to work well in a specific country or region. One East Asian advocate mentioned that "top-down approaches work really well in Asia," noting that governments in the region had played a significant role in encouraging diet change historically, while another advocate in the region noted that their government has been particularly good at managing other public health issues, such as tobacco control.

Survey respondents and focus group participants who were not currently conducting these large-scale approaches tended to be more interested in pursuing policy advocacy over corporate advocacy. Many focus group participants were interested in such ideas as lobbying for a tax on processed meat, legislating for plant-based options in school meals with the national government, or leveraging public health funding for plant-based diets.

Why Groups Don't Pursue This Approach

Large-scale institutional approaches are often seen as challenging for a variety of reasons including issues with stakeholders, contextual challenges, branding and positioning, and resource limitations.

Several advocates mentioned challenges with engaging stakeholders in policy and corporate work. Some refrained from adopting policy approaches due to concerns that such policies could be repealed by subsequent governments, a lack of access to the right people in policy and government, and because there is "lots of bureaucracy" to navigate in policy work. One survey respondent noted that working with institutional stakeholders not only required "more courage and patience [to challenge] political powers," but also came with additional administrative demands from donors, stating that: "[it's] difficult for a small organization to give satisfactory accountability to sponsors/donors."

The perceived potential of large-scale institutional approaches may also be highly variable across regions. Almost a quarter of survey respondents referred to external limitations or context-specific constraints when asked why they were not pursuing policy approaches. For example, one respondent in the Caribbean noted that: “[the] government is difficult to penetrate,” while a U.S.-based advocate said that “it seems impossible to effect policy change,” due to “very conservative, regressive legislators.” In East Asia, one advocate suggested that people in their city have strong free-market beliefs, and reject corporate or policy advocacy work that “tries to affect, influence or infringe upon someone’s decision-making.”

Establishing the right branding and positioning to interface with institutions can also be a challenge. For instance, an Australian advocate faced challenges when approaching a government body as a representative of an organization perceived as "a little bit punk, a little bit fringe, a little bit absolute, or a little bit extreme," which he believed limited his organization's ability to be taken seriously by mainstream institutions. One East Asian advocate highlighted another obstacle associated with positioning their for-profit work with corporate institutions:

> *… [Our consulting work] is not going that well … because local industry is not used to paying for soft services—anything requiring knowledge. They just expect an organization like ours, because we’re working for the public good, to give it to them for free.*

Ultimately, resource limitations, particularly funding, were the main reason that organizations decided not to pursue these approaches. For example, two groups noted the high costs and logistical challenges associated with policy training and the frequent traveling necessary to do legislative work. One advocate also pointed to additional personal stress associated with policy work and the fact that they didn’t “have the time to dedicate [themselves] to all the demands required by this approach.”

Resources To Support This Approach

Alongside financial support, there are important skill gaps that need to be addressed before organizations can effectively pursue these advocacy approaches.

Expert support and capacity building were central examples of how to address these skill gaps—one Malaysian advocate noted that they “really need legal expertise, counselors, and professionals in [animal welfare law] to push for transformations in the legal area,” while a U.S. organization similarly reported that they could not afford lawyers to support their legal and policy work. Examples of corporate-specific upskilling included: “in-depth coaching/training on corporate communications,” and requests for “a consultant … who has been involved in the plant-based industry.”

Direct Work With Animals

Overview

In our survey, 30% of organizations conducted direct work with animals, such as sanctuaries or veterinary work. Over half of those organizations focused on it as their primary approach, comprising 15% of the full sample.

Direct work was generally uncorrelated with pursuing other approaches, and tended to be pursued more frequently by small or volunteer-led organizations.

Why Groups Pursue This Approach

As with individual advocacy, advocates focusing on direct work with animals often held a bottom-up theory of change related to emotional influence. Many saw the process of helping animals directly as having both immediate benefits to the animals, and having a strong emotional impact on others, such as visitors to the sanctuary. Advocates described the emotional power that can be created by certain experiences or connections with real animals (an idea that previous Faunalytics research has supported). For example, one sanctuary owner believed that through spending time with rescued animals, "the stories of individuals [were able to reach] people's hearts and minds." As such, this approach has some intersections with individual approaches.

Many advocates saw direct work with animals as a basis for a mixed welfarist/abolitionist strategy. For instance, a sanctuary owner mentioned that combining education, support for farm transitions, and rescuing individual animals can help to "create the perfect scenario for individual animals to become ambassadors of their own stories and of their own rights," indicating that multiple different approaches can be complementary.

More than other forms of advocacy, personal feelings and a sense of necessity or responsibility play a major part in decisions to pursue direct work with animals. For example, one advocate who had previously been working on policy work transitioned to working directly with animals because of their desire "to be involved with something that helps individual animals," while another advocate's journey to direct work began with their decision to look after a horse that was going to be killed.

Why Groups Don't Pursue This Approach

Direct work is often seen as particularly challenging and time-consuming, both by those who do and do not pursue this approach. The challenges of direct work were largely related to resources, funding, time, expertise, and infrastructure. Some noted that additional funding was essential to maintain the functioning of their basic operations, due to high operating costs and

limited resources. As such, sanctuary staff faced many challenges with feeding and homing animals that need support:

> *...all [grassroots] animal rights organizations struggle with funding … But sanctuaries obviously struggle a lot more because we need to take care of individual animals.*

Another advocate pointed out the difficulties of maintaining the property:

> *We have been rescuing and treating animals for the last 17 years. We have hospitals, ambulances, doctors, etc., but we do not have space. The organization spends a huge amount on rent.*

These concerns were echoed by advocates who were not interested in pursuing direct work: resources, costs, and the need for professional support such as veterinary expertise were noted as key reasons not to pursue these approaches.

Effectiveness concerns were also particularly common among survey respondents not interested in conducting direct work. Many believed that direct work was ineffective, with one noting that it had "very low efficiency in terms of number of animals helped per dollar spent." Some believed that the theory of change of sanctuaries in particular was not sustainable, as they are only able to help a limited number of animals.

Finally, some countries or regions without major agricultural production (e.g., Hong Kong) are not seen as pragmatic areas to conduct direct work with farmed animals.

Resources To Support This Approach

Many advocates felt that direct work with animals is particularly difficult to fund, so other resources may be necessary to enable these advocates to continue and develop their approaches.

One focus group emphasised the role of commercialization and creating alternative revenue streams. For example, renting out accommodation in sanctuaries as an ecotourism or Airbnb venue, hosting tours, or selling products at sanctuaries. Advocates noted that, if they had the resources to invest in these alternative revenue streams, sanctuaries could become self-sustaining and as well as protecting animals would also "keep this positive virtuous cycle going of creating resources that actually fund other initiatives."

An ambitious extension approach discussed by one participant involved developing replicable models or strategies for sanctuaries (see Open Sanctuary) that could enable these types of advocacy to be practiced sustainably elsewhere. To achieve these goals, advocates noted that collaboration between sanctuaries was essential:

...we need more collaboration, and sharing knowledge and experiences, [we need to try] to address the same challenges in a more coordinated way.

Movement Support Approaches

Overview

10% of all survey respondents indicated that they were involved in a movement support approach, indirectly helping animals by providing support to other advocates. However, note that we didn't give this as an option and these responses were in the "other" category. Therefore this category is likely underreported.

Respondents described diverse ways that they helped to build the animal advocacy community, including activism and community building, research, events, internal capacity-building, public relations, and communication.

As we didn't include movement support advocacy as a specific option in our survey, we do not have as much detailed information about the demographics of these organizations.

Why Groups Pursue This Approach

Movement support advocacy is based on a theory of change in which building a stronger (larger and/or more professional) animal advocacy movement can create a virtuous cycle, leading to increasingly effective advocacy and downstream impact. Movement expansion is one component of this, such as "bringing people from the pet world" to farmed animal or vegan advocacy, or growing the movement among youth. One U.S. advocate emphasized "making animal advocacy accessible to everyone," including "groups that have been traditionally left out of the conversation" and "making sure that it's palatable for people from different educational backgrounds."

This approach was also framed in terms of movement professionalization. Some advocates mentioned the need to increase the number of full-time staff working in the movement, and claimed that "there's only so much that you can do with volunteers," while another advocate compared the vegan movement to the environmental movement in their country where "the environmental NGOs became professional NGOs, having staff, recruiting teams, and working day-in-day-out on the issues and bringing their issues forward." One advocate mentioned the need to make the messaging of the movement more professional and unified: "becoming professional rather than a bunch of amateurs running around and all talking in a different manner," and overcoming the fragmentation that has previously hurt the movement.

Other approaches under movement support include fundraising and helping people make career changes. For example, one organization conducts "community-building work to get our

audience to support the cause even more, either through their donations or their careers." Another provided an interesting example of combining top-down and culture-based theories of change: "our theory of change is to get vegans into influential positions and change the culture."

Lastly, one advocate working on aquatic animal welfare focused on influencing other organizations, and "lobbies [other] animal advocacy organizations to include aquatic animals in their … work."

Why Groups Don't Pursue This Approach

We have no data on why groups choose not to pursue movement support approaches because we didn't ask about movement support approaches in the survey, and focus group participants didn't mention any reason for not working on these approaches.

Resources To Support This Approach

As movement support was seen as important by many groups, providing funding to movement and capacity-builders may facilitate other approaches indirectly.

Additionally, advocates mentioned a few specific ideas for movement support in international contexts. One advocate noted that, as the vast majority of advocacy training materials are in English, translation to other languages is a valuable way of making capacity-building more accessible to advocates in countries where English is less commonly-used:

> *I've seen the trainings that are currently available for animal advocates and they appear to all be in English. A lot of our local animal advocates do not speak or understand English at a high enough level where that training would be effective without an interpretation.*

One potentially neglected option was for large, multinational organizations or coalitions to have a cultural liaison or coordinator to facilitate the support of movements in lower-income countries:

> *What helps us in our organization is the fact that our regional liaison is from India. So, she understands the differences between the Asian or the target audience and the Western one. The approach is quite different, but it's easier having some liaison or coordinator from the same region.*

Conclusions

This study explored the diverse approaches adopted by animal advocacy organizations, seeking to understand the strategies they employ, the reasons behind their choices, and the factors that facilitate or limit their ability to pursue alternative approaches. Our findings reveal an advocacy

landscape where many organizations are not only implementing multiple strategies, but are also interested in exploring new approaches with potential for greater impact and lasting change for animals.

One consistent finding is that an organization's capacity to explore or adopt new strategies is highly dependent on the availability of resources. Organizations frequently struggle with financial and staffing constraints that limit their operational and strategic scope. It is therefore not at all surprising that larger organizations, with fewer resource limitations, are more likely to pursue multiple approaches, especially large-scale institutional advocacy.

Many organizations from our study that transitioned into institutional approaches did so through a gradual process, starting from individual approaches or direct work with animals, progressing to local institutional approaches, and eventually reaching large-scale institutional approaches. This reinforces the role of local institutional advocacy as a potential stepping stone to large-scale institutional approaches, reinforcing a similar finding from a previous Faunalytics report. Nevertheless, the journey to expanding advocacy approaches is not uniform. Some younger and smaller organizations in our study seem to have "leapfrogged" straight into large-scale approaches with support from incubators or accelerators, suggesting alternative pathways to institutional impact. Further research into these processes, exploring possibilities for acceleration or alternative routes, holds significant potential for enhancing advocacy effectiveness.

Importantly, our study also finds that many advocates were more interested in expanding or improving upon their current approaches rather than fully transitioning to unrelated and entirely new approaches. These insights raise questions about organizational and movement strategies: Is it more beneficial to encourage organizations to diversify their approaches or to build on their existing methods? Would the animal advocacy movement benefit more from numerous specialized organizations or fewer but larger entities that engage in multiple strategies? How do these dynamics shift across different contexts?

While these questions fall beyond this study's scope, they may be critical for informing future strategic decisions within the animal advocacy movement, and we hope this study has provided insights to support this ongoing discussion.

In the short term, there is a clear consensus among organizations that unlocking greater impact requires improvements in funding, staffing, and professional development. Additionally, we also discovered a strong demand for increased knowledge resources, both tacit and experiential (through networking and collaboration) and explicit (via access to research and data). While research organizations have a clear role to play in helping to fill explicit knowledge gaps, this report highlights that funders and advocates can also be instrumental to building and sharing knowledge by connecting organizations working on and interested in similar approaches.

Finally, our study finds that advocates' perceptions of the most impactful or effective approaches may differ from funder perspectives, be affected by different values and theories of change, or by feasibility and tractability in a specific context. This highlights the need for more nuanced dialogue and understanding between advocates and funders. Funders might consider adopting more flexible criteria that better accommodate the diverse factors involved in organizations' strategic decision-making, ensuring that their support aligns more closely with the actual needs and contexts of advocacy groups. Similarly, advocates should look to clearly articulate their strategic considerations and underlying theories of change, which could not only improve communication with funders, but may also strengthen the selection of strategic approaches.

Caveats & Limitations

As with all reports, this one has some important caveats and limitations to bear in mind.

Sample Representativeness. Our sample was drawn from a list of 798 animal advocacy organizations provided by Faunalytics. Although this list includes organizations from around the world, it is not necessarily globally representative. It is therefore likely that certain geographies are overrepresented while others are underrepresented. Additionally, our response rate was 37%, and respondents who completed the survey may have had different characteristics to organizations who did not. Smaller organizations may be underrepresented in this sample due to lack of contact and the greater relative burden that participating in the survey or focus group would place on them. However, the opportunity costs of participating might have been perceived as greater for decision-makers in larger animal advocacy organizations. As a result, there may be some bias in both directions in terms of neglecting the perspectives of very small or very large organizations. Additionally, it is important to remember that qualitative findings are based on a small sample of advocates who do not necessarily represent the whole movement in the weight they place on different concerns or potential solutions. In particular, while we were fortunate to be able to include advocates from a range of backgrounds and approaches, this heterogeneity means that any findings for particular regions or advocacy approaches are based on even smaller samples: sometimes as few as three or four advocates from a given region.

Sample Size. We had aimed to obtain responses from a minimum of 270 participants in order to have sufficient statistical power to test our key hypotheses quantitatively, including 130 participants per advocacy approach. Unfortunately, we were only able to recruit 197 valid responses despite our best efforts, and only individual advocacy met the 130 participant threshold. Therefore, we were underpowered to test many of our quantitative hypotheses, meaning that few of the results were statistically significant.

Potential Bias. Although we attempted to avoid bias throughout, there are various biases that may have affected our results, in addition to those associated with limitations on

representativeness. For instance, social desirability bias may have played a role in responses, as respondents may have wanted to portray themselves or their organizations in a positive light. Respondents may also have had imperfect recall or been influenced by other members of their focus group. Finally, although we mitigated this by using multiple coders, researcher's subjective interpretations of observational data may have also led to biased interpretation.

Categorization. The survey, which was conducted first, categorized advocacy approaches in terms of policy work, corporate work, institutional work, direct work with animals, and individual diet advocacy. After conducting the focus groups, we refined this categorization, broadening individual diet approaches to include all individual approaches, and adding a category for movement support approaches. This means that some of the survey data does not correspond exactly with this final categorization. Another issue that we recognised later in our research was the phrasing of the survey question about corporate advocacy: "Corporate Campaigns (e.g., cage-free campaigns)." Potentially due to this welfare-focused example, some respondents said in open-ended responses they were not interested in corporate campaigns because they are opposed to welfarism. This example may have inadvertently shaped responses, as it is possible that mentioning plant-based corporate campaigns may have led to different results.

Supplementary Materials

Sample Description

A list of individuals associated with animal advocacy groups around the world was compiled internally—we aimed to select groups from multiple regions of the world, with a mix of groups focusing on individual and institutional advocacy approaches. Individuals from this list were invited to participate in the survey via email. Individuals were eligible to participate if they indicated that their organization works on farmed animals (including farmed land animals, farmed aquatic animals, or dogs/cats raised for consumption).

We sent invitations to 798 advocates. 43 of the emails bounced, leaving a total of 755 invitations delivered. 278 advocates responded, giving a response rate of 37%. 197 responses (26% of delivered) were retained after data cleaning. Responses were removed during data cleaning if respondents did not work with farmed animals, if the survey completion time was unusually low, if they did not consent to participating, or if they were duplicates.

The low response rate may have introduced some bias, as those who didn't respond may have different views or characteristics compared to those who did. See the following table for the details of our sample:

Table 2: Overview of Sample Characteristics

Characteristics	Results
Geographic Distribution (Country Focus)	
U.S.	18%
India	11%
Indonesia	8%
Mexico	7%
Brazil	6%
Japan	6%
Malaysia	6%
Other	42%
Geographic Level	
National level	66%
Regional level (e.g. Africa/Latin America)	13%
International level	21%
Participant Role	
Strategic and Oversight Role	69%
Fundraising and Grants	54%
Operations	54%
Annual Organizational Revenue	
Median	$42,400 USD
Range	$0 - $30,000,000 USD
Mission	
Mixed mission: combining both welfare and rights	44%
Animal rights-oriented mission	38%
Animal welfare-oriented mission	11%

For the qualitative stage of the study, we conducted focus groups with 20 individuals working for farmed animal advocacy organizations. The sample was drawn from respondents to the initial survey and was based primarily on: a) advocacy approaches taken and interest in given

approaches, aided by clusters derived from the quantitative analysis stage, and b) geographical location. The clusters were based on a K-modes clustering analysis to divide groups according to a) choice of approach and b) interest in other approaches. This enabled us to group together relevant groups in the focus group discussions.

We held two focus groups for each cluster, one with participants from Western countries and one from non-Western countries, comprising a total of six groups.

Research Questions

Our main research questions (RQs) that we used in our quantitative analysis were:

1) What are the different advocacy approaches used by animal protection groups?
2) What factors influence groups' selection of approaches?
3) How useful are different resources?
4) What resources would best support different types of groups?
5) What are the obstacles faced by animal protection groups?
6) Can groups be clustered into meaningful segments based on their choice of approach and/or potential areas of support?

Quantitative Analysis

To test the hypothesis that approaches taken by non-Western groups differ significantly from Western groups, we ran a chi-square test of independence to compare the number of Western and non-Western groups that engage in each type of animal advocacy approach (one test per approach). We corrected for multiple testing across all tests using the Benjamini-Hochberg correction for false discovery rate (i.e., FDR correction).

To understand which factors (e.g., organizational characteristics, importance of various considerations) influence groups' selection of approaches (RQ2), we ran a hierarchical binary logistic regression for each animal advocacy approach separately as the outcome variable. We corrected for multiple testing across all tests using the FDR correction.

To understand the usefulness of different resources (RQ3), usefulness ratings for each were compared using Mann-Whitney U tests. We corrected for multiple testing across all tests using the FDR correction.

To understand which resources would best support different types of groups (RQ4), we ran an ordinal logistic regression for each type of resource where the outcome variable was the level of usefulness. Independent variables were organization size, organization country (Western or non-Western), organization scope, organization animal focus, organization revenue, number of

years the organization had been involved in farmed animal advocacy, organization primary focus, and organization mission. We corrected for multiple testing across all tests using the FDR correction.

To investigate whether animal advocacy groups form meaningful segments (RQ6), we employed a K-modes clustering analysis, considering various organization characteristics. Once the clusters were confirmed, we appended a new variable indicating the cluster membership to the dataset. The number of clusters was finalized based on clustering validity indices, and each resulting cluster was evaluated and profiled according to its characteristics.

Due to the length of these results, we have included them in an additional file, available here. Each tab contains the summarized results of our models for each analysis by research question. Results are best viewed by downloading the file.

Qualitative Analysis

We designed the focus group guide to address research questions that had not been adequately answered in the survey stage, supplement our quantitative findings, and provide detailed insights into groups' decision-making processes. Participants were able to describe their advocacy approaches in detail, explain the reasoning behind why they chose these approaches and how the decision-making process worked, including the structure of this process and who was involved. We then asked what the advantages and disadvantages of their current approach were, what challenges they currently faced and what plans they had for improving their advocacy approaches. Find the full interview guide in the relevant OSF section.

Thematic analysis was used for the open-ended survey responses and focus group transcripts. The coding team used a combination of deductive and inductive coding to generate code categories, which were then refined iteratively. Analysis proceeded according to the following stages:

1) Prior to data collection, a set of deductive codes was generated.
2) After collecting the focus group data, the principal coder coded a subsection of the transcripts and open-ended survey responses, creating inductive codes based on themes in the data.
3) This was followed by a preliminary review of this subsection of the data by the reviewer, who went through the coded transcripts and open-ended survey responses to identify potential alternative codes and refinements.
4) The two coders discussed relevant changes, then reviewed and refined the coding scheme.

5) Using this refined coding scheme, the principal coder coded the remaining transcripts.
6) A final review of all codes was conducted by the principal coder to ensure accuracy and completeness.
7) Occurrence of these codes was analyzed with the reviewer to identify new and emerging themes, connections between themes, and categories of themes. These themes were used to structure the qualitative findings in the report.

Clustering Analysis

Our clustering analysis was performed to answer RQ6 ("Can groups be clustered into meaningful segments based on their choice of approach and/or potential areas of support?") and provide the basis for focus group sampling. We tested multiple variable combinations, and discovered that respondents' preferred support types did not correlate strongly enough to create distinct clusters on that basis. Instead, we divided groups according to a) choice of approach and b) interest in other approaches. These three clusters emerged from the analysis process:

- **Cluster 1:** Organizations that are not currently pursuing, and are less interested in, policy, corporate or institutional work (*n* = 52)
- **Cluster 2:** Multi-approach organizations, pursuing at least one of the three following advocacy approaches: corporate, policy, and institutional work (*n* = 86)
- **Cluster 3:** Organizations that are interested in transitioning/expanding into corporate, policy or institutional work (*n* = 72)

Clustering Process Details

For the K-modes clustering analysis, we analyzed various pre-registered characteristics of organizations including organization size, organization age, mission, animal focus, advocacy approach and the factors considered when choosing an advocacy approach. We initially set the algorithm with 3 clusters, a maximum of 100 iterations, and 100 starting configurations.

We then refined the number of clusters based on the average within-cluster sum of differences (withindiff), cluster size, and consistency, per Huang (1997). After validating the quality of clusters using within-cluster differences and clustering validity indices, we appended a new variable for cluster membership to the dataset. Each resulting cluster was then evaluated and profiled according to its characteristics.

After testing multiple sets of correlated variables, we identified that interest in pursuing corporate, policy and institutional advocacy were all positively correlated: a group that pursues one of these approaches is more likely to pursue another. Among groups that don't currently pursue these advocacy types, there was a further division between groups that are interested and groups that are uninterested in these approaches, which produced three relatively

evenly-sized clusters. This strategy generated consistent clusters across 20 different random seeds.

We used the silhouette score (Salem et al, 2021) to test the validity of clusters. We tested across different random seeds and obtained an Average Silhouette Score of 0.329. This indicates that clusters are considered partially distinct (Lovmar et al, 2005).

These clusters provided a framework to conduct the selection process of focus groups; however, we decided not to include them as a core part of our analysis due to the fact that they were not as distinct in terms of profiling variables as we had hoped.