



Research And Data As Tools In Advocates' Decision-Making

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Contents

Background	4
Key Findings	4
Recommendations	5
Applying These Findings	10
In Your Work	10
In Our Work	10
Behind The Project	11
Research Team	11
Acknowledgements	11
Research Terminology	11
Research Ethics Statement	11
Method	12
Sample Frame	12
Participants	13
Analysis Method	14
Results	14
Knowledge Translation	14
Utilizing Research And Evidence	16
Purpose Of Research And Evidence In Animal Advocacy	16
External Legitimacy And Communication	17
Internal Priority-Setting And Decision-Making	18
Building Partnerships And Allies	19
Catalyzing Action By Individuals And Institutions	20
Identifying Problems And Solutions	21
Topics And Focus Of Research Used In Animal Advocacy	23
Animal Wellbeing Research	23
Interdisciplinary Research	23
Behavioral And Social Change Research	24
Gaps And Challenges In Existing Research And Evidence	25
Research Topics With Gaps	25
Animal Wellbeing For Specific Geographies And Species	25
Impact Of Social Movements	28
Efficacy Of Behavioral Nudges	29
Research In The Real World	30

Research Characteristics That Create Challenges	30
Complex Or Ambiguous Findings	30
Insufficient Evidence From Evaluation Studies On Tactics	31
Overall Research Capacity And Quality	33
Finding And Utilizing Research And Evidence	33
Accessing Information	34
Vetting Information	35
Interpreting And Applying Information	37
Form Of Translated Information	38
Organization-Led Research And Knowledge Translation	40
Addressing Research And Knowledge Gaps	40
Knowledge Translation Form And Purpose	41
Opportunities For Improvement Throughout The Knowledge Translation Cycle	43
Collaboration In Setting Research Priorities	43
Coordination In Research And Knowledge Translation	44
Curation Of Knowledge Communities And Resources	45
Conclusions	47
Animal Advocacy Organizations Use Research and Evidence in Several Ways	47
More Evidence Is Needed on Effective Tactics and Emerging Production Systems	47
Investments in Collaboration and Knowledge Translation Can Enhance the Impact of Research for Animals	48
Caveats & Limitations	48
Supplementary Materials	50
Detailed Method	50
Ethics Review & Preregistration	50
Sample Frame	50
Data Collection	50
Respondent Characteristics	51
Data Analysis	52
Appendix A: Study Sample Details	53
Appendix B: Examples Of Research Use	53
Research Results That Changed Campaigns	53
Research On Tactics	54
Knowledge Translation To Other Professionals	54
Data For Storytelling	55

Background

While all animal advocacy organizations have clear mission statements, priorities, and tactics that guide both day-to-day activities and big-picture planning, groups vary in how they use data in their decision-making. There is a growing interest in the animal advocacy ecosystem across many focal areas in taking evidence-based actions and having a research foundation for statements and positions. However, some organizations hypothesize that research and data might not be seen as relevant or able to be integrated with these foundational commitments.

In the animal advocacy space, Faunalytics acts as a knowledge broker, committed to what's known as knowledge translation: the process of moving research, data, evidence from original researchers and research outputs into formats and framings for a wide range of actors. That's why Faunalytics commissioned this study about the use of research in animal advocacy. This isn't a program evaluation: none of the interview questions mentioned Faunalytics, though several of the participants did in their answers.

The purpose of this study is to explore how animal advocacy organizations access, interpret, and use research, data, and other forms of evidence in their work. The research project included primary data collection through interviews and thematic analysis of the interview transcripts. Participants were 20 staff members of animal advocacy organizations around the world, all of which include farmed animals in their mandate.

Key Findings

1. **Research and evidence in animal advocacy can be categorized in terms of five purposes, which may inform how the research should be undertaken.** First, being evidence-based helps organizations establish their legitimacy. Almost all organizations report that framing their positions, priorities, and tactics as evidence-based increases their external legitimacy with all types of individuals and institutions they seek to influence. Research and evidence also support internal decision-making on how to act on foundational priorities. Research processes and outputs can build partnerships and alliances across animal advocacy organizations and with other related movements. Evidence is often used to catalyze action by individuals and institutions, and in communication more generally around identifying problems and solutions to animal welfare and wellbeing challenges.
2. **Most organizations and audiences see peer-reviewed publications and the research behind them as the gold standard for rigor.** Government and industry research is often seen as biased, but also the basis for the dominant systems and narratives and thus cannot be ignored. Animal advocacy organizations are well-positioned to identify research priorities, collect data related to internal strategies, and share evaluation evidence. However, when research is used for the first category,

external legitimacy, it is best done by an academic or other institutional researcher not directly affiliated with a specific animal advocacy organization or effort.

3. **Research is not often used to set foundational priorities for existing organizations, but it is used to shift tactics and identify emerging issues or opportunities for advocacy.** That is, organizations are “*tactic flexible and cause inflexible*.” While they are not reorienting their missions based on research, they use research and data at every other level—looking for information that supports existing positions, adjusting data points and messaging when new information emerges, and pivoting or reorienting their tactics in the face of new data. Research and knowledge translation that is oriented toward solutions or catalyzing action is useful for a wide range of audiences.
4. **Organizations need evidence syntheses that provide a ‘state of the state’ on specific topics,** including agreement on key facts and figures when possible, as well as detailed annotated bibliographies, exhaustive literature reviews, or similar extensive summaries of the current state of the knowledge on general topics.
5. **The most foundational gaps in the evidence base are related to how to effect change, especially regarding under-researched species and geographies.** More social science research and knowledge translation is needed on the impact and efficacy of behavioral nudges on one hand and social movement tactics on the other. Organizations also noted that gaps in the evidence base related to particular species, often those that are low economic value or not common in the Global North, and related to specific geographies, especially in the Global South.
6. **Challenges to using existing research include having the time and expertise to translate complexity and ambiguity in research findings into actionable information.** More evidence is needed from evaluation and internal data collection about tactics that work AND tactics that do not work to achieve intended outcomes.
7. **Many organizations seek out research both actively and passively.** Organizations access new information somewhat passively through extensive affinity networks, and intentionally through knowledge translation hubs and trusted individuals and organizations when seeking information for specific programming and communication purposes.

Recommendations

In general, the more collaboration and coordination within researchers and between researchers and advocates, the more we are able to address complex problems with relatively scarce resources and a diversity of tactics. However, specific recommendations vary based on your role in the knowledge translation process.

Funders Should:

- **Prioritize investments in research gaps, especially related to needs and solutions in specific geographies and social science studies related to diverse tactics.** There

are research gaps especially for Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, especially related to production systems and cultural contexts very different from those in North America and Europe. For organizations working the Global South, the evidence base from the Global North is seen as legitimate but not always relevant to the production systems or social contexts.

- **Support long-term studies to look at impact, not just outcomes.** Investments in research on the efficacy of tactics to mobilize public support and policy change need to align with the long time horizons that are necessary to understand the short- and long-term impacts of various approaches to building the animal advocacy movement. Most of the gaps and challenges in the existing research and evidence base relate to questions of how to effect change, rather than what to change or why to act.
- **Fund knowledge translation activities, including at the end of research and evaluation projects and to support synthesis activities.** Too many lessons learned are not communicated outside of the organizations directly focused on specific actions or research projects, and knowledge translation activities require time and capacity that many organizations don't have unless built into funding opportunities. Similarly, funding for synthesis and interpretation of existing information is a form of knowledge translation that can help ensure that animal advocacy organizations are communicating and making decisions based upon the most up-to-date and complete evidence base possible.

Animal Advocacy Organizations Should:

- **Share research plans and outputs to maximize learning and decrease redundancy.** Because overall financial and human resources are scarce, animal advocacy organizations can maximize impact by sharing their plans for specific projects before getting started, to reduce redundancy, as well as their outcomes or findings at the end of projects, to support learning about what works and what doesn't work to improve animal wellbeing and social support for animal advocacy. Few organizations wish they could do more research themselves.
- **Expand coordination efforts by developing a shared meta-theory of change and research priorities within it.** In addition to sharing before and after specific projects or actions, many animal advocacy organizations would welcome having a shared high-level vision for the goals that organizations share and the many possible impact pathways to achieve these goals. A shared theory of change could then help organizations communicate their research plans as well as identify gaps or areas of overlap for further collaboration.
- **Build in time and resources for knowledge translation activities to support external coordination and internal decision-making.** When possible, organizations should include time and financial resources to support knowledge translation activities, especially related to sharing results of evaluation studies and similar programmatic

learning. Sharing learning and information gathered through advocacy or applied research processes is useful to enhance external coordination across animal advocacy organizations, and knowledge translation can also support internal learning and application of new information for decision-making.

Research Organizations Should:

- **Continue to focus on knowledge translation activities that include summarizing research and synthesizing evidence.** Animal advocacy organizations want access to a research and evidence base that is diverse and connects the dots about drivers of problems and possible solutions.

For example, [recent](#) and [upcoming](#) systematic reviews and meta-analyses are the gold standard for summary information about the current state of evidence on a topic. However, more [casual synthesis](#) of multiple studies can be helpful as well.

- **Build and translate evidence on long-term tactics and approaches to effecting change.** Social movements research can examine the efficacy of many different tactics happening at the same time in different places, rather than incrementally documenting short-term changes. This fuels the longevity of the movement.

For example, Animal Charity Evaluators creates [Theory of Change visuals](#) for their recommended charities that demonstrate diverse pathways for progress. Click through to the recommended charities' comprehensive reviews to see them.

- **Add details about quality and legitimacy to the information (metadata) associated with specific research products whenever possible.** Most animal advocacy organizations use research and data in their work to increase their external legitimacy, and having a quick way to understand its quality and legitimacy based on things like source, funding, and level of transparency would help them make decisions about when and how to use different pieces of evidence.

For example, at Faunalytics we disclose sources in all of our [original research](#) and [library summaries](#), disclose when we have received [funding](#) for a given project, and provide as much [transparency](#) about study materials and data as participant confidentiality allows.

- **Provide guidance and frameworks to organizations to support diffusion of knowledge translation activities.** Knowledge brokers, like Faunalytics and our peer organizations, should communicate research findings in ways most likely to result in their practical application.

For example, [Impactful Animal Advocacy](#) has a Slack research hub for advocates and researchers to share knowledge. Researchers can post their studies, answer questions about their findings, and give advice to advocates in real-time, increasing the odds that the study will have an impact.

- **Researchers and knowledge brokers should develop relationships with intended users of the research early to increase the research's effectiveness.** Setting a



shared research agenda among researchers and animal advocacy organizations or creating space for animal advocacy organizations to publicly identify their research needs would make the end results more actionable and would speed the knowledge translation process.

For example, [Good Growth](#) is implementing a Research-to-Action lab, where researchers give presentations to groups of advocates designed to give practical advice.

- **Coordinate and collaborate with other researchers, including organizations and academics.** Transparency around current research activities is crucial, and researchers should work together to set shared research agendas when possible and build or implement systems that can enable matchmaking between organizations and researchers.

For example, Vegan Thesis has recently launched a [database of open research questions](#) for undergraduate and graduate students to draw on in their work.

The 5 Uses of Research in Animal Advocacy

Research in animal advocacy nearly always falls into one or more of these categories. Each type of research benefits from different characteristics so advocates and investigators should explicitly consider their research goals to maximize the chances of impact.



External Legitimacy

To demonstrate that our movement is driven by logic as well as empathy. For this use, it's crucial to convey credibility and lack of bias.

Ideal Research Characteristics:

- Peer-reviewed
- Not exaggerated
- Conducted by or with academics

Examples include:

- Studies demonstrating meat's climate impact
- Proof of animal sentience

Internal Decision-Making

To choose campaign targets, set priorities, and inform theories of change. For this use, advocates should be open to changing strategies based on results.

Ideal Research Characteristics:

- Set up to test practical advocacy methods
- Informed by advocates' needs
- Co-created with advocates

Examples include:

- Polling data on pro-animal legislation
- Impact evaluations or M&E projects



Building Partnerships

To identify potential collaborative opportunities, especially with groups from other movements. For this use, we must be open to finding areas of common ground.

Ideal Research Characteristics:

- Pragmatically-minded
- Proactively engaging other issues
- Intersectional

Examples include:

- Studies examining collaboration potential
- Investigations into commonalities with social justice work

Catalyzing Action

To help non-animal audiences connect animal topics to other salient issues, especially climate and health. This spurs decision-makers and people into creating tangible change.

Ideal Research Characteristics:

- Specific to an issue
- Demonstrating a need for action
- Peer-reviewed, depending on the audience

Examples include:

- Data about alt proteins' health benefits
- Research showing that there are effective alternatives to animal testing



Identifying Problems and Solutions

To flag key barriers, species, regions, to address, along with potential solutions. This research should look for neglected areas ripe for impact.

Ideal Research Characteristics:

- Identifies key paths forward
- Fosters evidence-based optimism
- Pinpoints neglected cause areas

Examples include:

- Psychological studies on the meat paradox
- Datasets showing regions with high meat production

Applying These Findings

In Your Work

As always, we invite advocates and nonprofit organizations who would like guidance applying these findings to their own work to visit our virtual [Office Hours](#) or [contact us](#) for support.

In Our Work

This report presents Faunalytics with a rare opportunity to apply our research in our own work. We are excited to announce several changes for 2024 and beyond, which we are making to better reflect the needs of our audience as identified in this report. Upcoming initiatives include:

Accelerating Our Content:

- **Library Updates:** We will publish one more library summary per week, increasing our overall output by 25%. Additionally, we plan to cover more paywalled journal articles and animal ag industry reports to improve the utility of the least accessible content.
- **The Research of Advocacy blog series:** This new blog series, starting next month, will provide an in-depth review of a single advocacy intervention (e.g. documentaries, protests, social media) in each issue, designed for easy implementation by advocates.
- **Exploring Peer Review:** This three-part blog series will explore how peer-reviewed academic publishing functions and how animal advocates can engage with it.
- **Research Advice Hub Revamp:** We will soon refresh and expand our [Research Advice](#) section into a central hub for advocates to find answers to all their research-related questions. In addition to expanding the resources we provide ourselves, we will provide advocates with a roadmap to all that's out there for conducting, commissioning, compiling, and understanding research.

Improving Our Research Strategy:

- **Shared Agenda-Setting:** Beginning this year, we will investigate the various sources of research questions and agendas that are currently in use, identify ways to improve researchers' communication and increase collaboration, and facilitate coordinated research efforts through working groups, resource hubs, and the like.
- **Crowdsourced Monitoring and Evaluation:** Starting later this year, we will pilot a project that confidentially sources M&E data from animal advocacy organizations. With this pilot, we will examine the feasibility of collecting enough workable data to draw more general conclusions about particular categories of intervention or campaign.
- **Meta-Analyses:** Starting with our next research prioritization cycle, we will be emphasizing more frequent literature review and meta-analyses to tackle big questions in the movement that can't be answered by a single study.



- **Study Purpose and Peer Review:** We will categorize upcoming Faunalytics studies by research purpose, using this framework to determine when to pursue peer review and/or academic support to best achieve the goals of the research.

Expanding The Reach And Accessibility Of Faunalytics' Original Research:

- **Visual Summaries:** We will create social-media friendly visual summaries of key report takeaways for select Faunalytics studies.
- **Short-Form Videos:** For every Faunalytics study, we will create a one-minute video explaining key takeaways to be shared on social media.
- **Report Revamp:** Our Faunalytics report template will soon be more visually appealing and engaging.

Behind The Project

Research Team

This project was conducted by Dr. Kristal Jones of JG Research and Evaluation. Dr. Jo Anderson (Faunalytics) contributed to the research design and reviewed the final report, but was not involved in data collection or analysis, to ensure that this study would provide an anonymous arms-length view of research in animal advocacy.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the advocates who participated in this research, providing valuable input about how to improve knowledge translation in animal advocacy. In addition, we are grateful to Greg Boese for the original suggestion for this research, and to Faunalytics' donors for your support—your [donations](#) allow us to conduct essential research like this to help you take action for animals.

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 provides an overview of the overarching research questions and design; approaches to sampling, data collection, and data analysis; and characteristics of respondents. For more details, see the *Supplementary Materials* section.

This is a qualitative research study with the goal of understanding how different types of animal advocacy organizations engage with research and evidence for priority setting and decision making. The study is framed by the knowledge translation literature, as described in the *Knowledge Translation* section below.

Faunalytics supported the design of the study by contributing to the interview guide and creation of a sampling approach, but was not privy to participant selection or participation and did not have access to interview transcripts. This was done to protect participants' confidentiality and ability to speak freely about research in animal advocacy.

The open-ended interview guide was developed to reflect the general stages or phases of knowledge translation. The interview guide also included questions about the relevance and legitimacy of research and evidence to the mission of animal advocacy organizations, as a way to get at their understanding and orientation toward data and evidence. Finally, the interview guide included questions about how to improve the knowledge translation system to better support or enhance animal advocacy efforts of all types, with the goal of providing actionable implications for the research community that supports animal advocacy.

The research questions driving this study were:

1. What role does research, data, and other kinds of evidence play in priority-setting and communications of animal advocacy organizations?
2. Are there certain parts of the knowledge translation process that present barriers to the use of research, data, and evidence by animal advocacy organizations?
3. Do the use of research and/or barriers within the knowledge translation process vary by the size, geographic focus, and/or mission of the organization?

Sample Frame

The starting point for this study was a list of about 200 animal advocacy organizations provided by Faunalytics to JG Research and Evaluation (JG). Organizations on the list were stratified (or sorted) according to several characteristics in order to ensure that a range of organizations were represented in the study. Size of organization was the primary characteristic used, with additional stratification characteristics of the organization's geographic focus and mission or approach.

Size of organization was only possible to ascertain in a consistent way for organizations based in the United States and Canada using GuideStar profiles. Organizations based elsewhere were characterized when possible based on information available online or that they shared during their interviews. Mission or orientation was used to characterize organizations very coarsely in terms of whether they take an abolitionist approach, are rooted in Effective Altruism, or work more broadly geared towards animal wellbeing.

These strata and categories are shown in Table 1. For further details, see the *Supplementary Materials* section.

Table 1. Stratification Categories

Stratification categories	Strata within category
Size of organization (annual revenue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small = <\$500k USD • Medium = \$500k-\$1mil USD • Large = \$1-5mil USD • Very large = >\$5mil USD
Geographic focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global North = North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand • Global South = South and Southeast Asia, China, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central and South America • Both North and South or global focus
Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal welfare and wellbeing mission • Strictly abolitionist mission • Effective Altruism (EA) mission

JG collected data via Zoom interviews. For medium and large organizations, JG typically interviewed someone in a senior leadership position focused on research, strategy, or engagement. For small organizations, the contact was generally the founder or executive director. In total, JG sent 40 recruitment emails, which generated 20 interviews, for a 50% response rate and a sample size of roughly 10% of the total list of organizations.

Participants

In total, interviews were conducted with individuals representing 20 organizations. A summary of sample characteristics, subdivided by sample strata, is presented in Table 2. A full characterization of each organization included in the sample is presented in Table 3 in the Appendix.

Table 2. Summary Of Interview Sample Characteristics

Size	Total by size	Geography			Mission		
		Global north	Global south	Both	Animal welfare/ wellbeing	Abolitionist	EA
<i>Small</i>	8	4	1	3	4	2	2
<i>Medium</i>	6	2	3	1	3	1	2
<i>Large</i>	5	3		2	4		1
<i>Very large</i>	1			1	1		

Analysis Method

Interview transcriptions and notes were analyzed using an iterative thematic coding approach that included both deductive (preregistered) and inductive coding based on interpretation of the data. All thematic coding was done with an eye toward identifying similarities and differences across organizational types—size, geographic focus, and mission—as framed in the research questions. However, one key finding that will be explored and elaborated upon throughout the results section was the convergence of themes and reflections across organizational types. Because of the lack of clear and consistent contrast in key themes and implications, the quotes presented in the results section are not identified based on organizational characteristics unless the sentiment or theme being expressed was specific to a certain type of organization.

Results

Knowledge Translation

The research questions, interview guide, and thematic analysis for this project were all structured starting from knowledge translation core concepts. Knowledge translation is a framework for understanding how knowledge and information flows through networks of people and organizations from researchers all the way to organizations taking action based on new information (these networks are sometimes called knowledge systems; [Davison, 2009](#); [Estabrooks et al., 2006](#)).

Knowledge translation as a specific conceptual framework emerged in the health sciences as a way to understand the flow of information and potential bottlenecks to that flow through the health research and health care system. Originally, the question driving knowledge translation was how to get information from ‘bench to bedside’—that is, from the labs of biomedical researchers to the physicians and other providers who could apply it ([Davison, 2009](#)). More recently, understanding of knowledge translation dynamics has further expanded to include not just the communication and application of information from researchers to technical

professionals, but also through to a wide range of end users with many purposes ([Strifler et al., 2018](#); [Straus et al., 2009](#)).

The foundational starting point for knowledge translation studies is that there are many building blocks in the chain that moves from generating or identifying new information, and making that information accessible and applicable for individuals and organizations that can use it to drive action of some kind. As summarized by [Davison \(2009\)](#) and [Estabrooks \(2006\)](#), there are four key dimensions of knowledge translation activities that impact the ultimate efficacy of translation:

1. The focus of the research must be relevant for end users of the findings;
2. The purpose of translating the findings must align with feasible opportunities for application to real-world problems;
3. The format of information and communication must be framed to align with a feasible purpose; and
4. Individuals involved in the knowledge translation process should be open to an iterative process of ongoing learning and further translation.

Knowledge transfer theory notes that the flow of knowledge depends on both the characteristics of research topics and findings on one hand, and the characteristics of the end user on the other ([Estabrooks et al., 2006](#)). The purpose and format of knowledge translation should be accessible in a way that reflects the specific needs and capacities of the end users. Often, the challenges for organizations in engaging in the downstream knowledge translation process (i.e., finding and applying relevant research and data) reflect organizational limitations like a lack of research expertise to validate sources and offer disciplinary diversity ([Straus et al., 2012](#)) and the need to maintain consistent messaging even in the face of new information ([Kothari and Armstrong, 2011](#)).

Improvement in knowledge transfer can occur anywhere along the pathway from conceptualizing a problem or research topic to describing the real-world meaning of what is learned. Many studies that apply knowledge translation concepts to understand real-world communication pathways have noted the important role of *knowledge brokers*: go-betweens who ensure that purpose and format are aligned with various user needs ([Nuyens and Lansang, 2008](#)). Knowledge brokers can focus on supporting organizations and individuals within them, ensuring that information is integrated and presented in ways that resonate with these end users. This is work that many researchers are hesitant to do, since it requires defining a ‘so what’ or ‘to what end’ purpose for the information and further interpreting beyond the specific context within which data and analysis were originally conceptualized ([Wahabi and Al-Ansary, 2011](#); [Murphy et al., 2012](#)). Knowledge brokers can also focus upstream on original research agendas to improve the focus and relevance of research questions for end users ([Graham et al., 2007](#)).

Knowledge translation concepts have been applied in limited ways to understanding the use of research and data to support animal advocacy organizations and activities. Often, knowledge

translation focuses on using research to improve animal welfare through evidence-based communication to farmed animal producers ([Dam, 2012](#); [Venture et al., 2013](#)). There are also some more theoretical explorations of how much certainty and specificity is needed to support translation of concepts around animal sentience ([Leadbeater, 2017](#); [Pierce and Bekoff, 2018](#)). [Rajić et al. \(2013\)](#) make the argument that because the research and data that is potentially relevant for animal advocacy is inherently interdisciplinary, there is a need for knowledge brokers and others in the knowledge translation process to consider formats that synthesize across research sources and specific findings.

Building on many of these core concepts from knowledge translation, the objective of this study is to understand if and how animal advocacy organizations utilize research, data, and other types of evidence to make decisions at different levels and for different purposes within their organizations, in order to help Faunalytics and other research organizations in the animal advocacy space improve the translation of research for use by animal advocacy organizations.

Utilizing Research And Evidence

The top-level message across all types of organizations interviewed for this report can be summarized as follows: the animal advocacy ecosystem is “tactic flexible and cause inflexible.” This means that research and evidence are rarely used to set totally new priorities or revisit mission and vision statements. However, research is often used to justify, adapt, and evolve the topics and approaches used to work toward the inflexible cause.

Evidence and data are seen to increase legitimacy with most of the key audiences for animal advocacy, including the general public, policy makers, the private sector, and other advocacy communities. With diverse audiences and flexibility in specific focus areas, organizations draw on many different disciplinary sources and topics of research, including data and evidence related to animal sentience and wellbeing, human and environmental health, and social and behavioral change.

Purpose Of Research And Evidence In Animal Advocacy

Overall, research is used by animal advocacy organizations for internal decision-making, external communication and legitimacy, and to educate and mobilize individuals and institutions. Evidence is used to describe both problems and solutions. Appendix B provides several detailed examples of how interview respondents describe their organizations using research for a variety of purposes. Overall, respondents consistently emphasized the cyclical need to situate stories within data and make data meaningful through storytelling.

We want to be evidence-based and we want to be a trusted resource for credible scientific information about animal welfare and animal needs, or credible investigations into the conditions for animals in these sectors. So really wanting to get that kind of on-the-ground research component of this is what's happening for this animal in this venue or these animals in this food system supply chain. And really make sure that we're telling the animal stories within

this research, to take it from the abstract of, for example, billions of animals raised for food to, this chicken and their experiences going through this system.

External Legitimacy And Communication

Almost every respondent described the external legitimacy that comes from being a research-based organization. Evidence and research increase legitimacy with the media, with policymakers, and with most members of the general public. As a simple starting point, pointing to a research base shifts an advocacy message from opinion to objective statement by pointing to a source outside of the advocacy organization: *"We won't say it unless we can back it up. We won't put it out there unless we've got a source for it."*

Rhetorical credibility in communications and campaigns is also key—in other words, not giving politicians or corporations the ability to say "you don't know what you're talking about." Stated another way, and stated frequently by interview respondents, research is seen as a counterbalance to the mission-driven nature of advocacy work.

Being able to say you can come from this impartial way of thinking and view on things, versus just being the emotions. So it just helps back up your arguments and say, 'We need to change this for all of us. Just not only the animal perspective.'

Often it's just [that] research is a veneer of professionalism or a veneer of social acceptability. You know, 'Hey, we're doing a research project. This isn't X and Y, we're not a bunch of crazy vegans, we're working with academics.' It's like a way in through the side door.

I think really just trying to position ourselves as not radical and being more rational and driven by science and data is a challenge when you're also an advocacy organization that is trying to effect change.

Using research and evidence is especially important for legitimacy when engaging the media and the corporate sector. For the media, the goal is that *"if they ask for facts and figures, we're known for credible, reliable information that's not over exaggerating. It's not extreme. These are just the facts."* However, being able to use research in the media space is a necessary but not sufficient means of shifting the narrative for most organizations, because of the resource imbalance between animal advocacy organizations and the dominant system: *"Big ag is so well funded. It's incredible. And you know, they have entire control centers of folks watching to see when there's any news stories about the climate impacts of beef, so they can squash it and put their PR out on it."*

The legitimacy that comes from using research can create challenges for small organizations without the resources to conduct or commission research with PhD-level scientists to support their focused activities. One recommendation suggested by a few respondents is an independent "stamp of approval" for organizations that collect, analyze, and apply information in a systematic way. This certification could signal the legitimacy of the research to other organizations who could benefit from it.

Not all audiences see research as legitimizing. Organizations whose work focuses in the Global South generally experienced less questioning of science and evidence than did those organizations focused in the Global North. In the United States in particular, but also in Australia and parts of Western Europe, skepticism and “post-truth” orientations limit the efficacy of using data to engage the general public. As one respondent framed it:

How much do we need to rely on the science in talking to various audiences or just really use emotion to try to move them in the direction of travel we're hoping they'll go? And what is the utility of science and research at this point in time?

Another participant characterizes skepticism as unique to the U.S.:

We talk about climate change and factory farming and pandemics and the connections of all of that—this kind of One Health approach. But it is amazing, the skepticism. We do get a lot of negative reactions to it and things we'll do on social media and that disbelief of climate change existing, pandemic connections to animals. And these are things that the U.S. deals with more than other countries.

Internal Priority-Setting And Decision-Making

Using research and evidence to support internal processes is increasingly common and yet, from the point of view of many people, still underemphasized. As one respondent noted, “Education, research were always the things that traditionally 20 years ago were the add-ons. I'd like to think that in that 20 years, it has turned around so that they're the foundations for every project, because without them you can't see where to go next.” For organizations that report doing some of their own research, whether primary data collection or literature/evidence reviews, there is opportunity to further institutionalize the results in ongoing decision-making. Several respondents expressed something similar to this individual who works at a large organization:

We got into a point as an organization where we were just doing too much research and it was kind of like we did the research and put it out there and then didn't really follow up on that research, take that research into a sustained campaign [...] Like it shouldn't be something that we just put out into the world and then it's there and good for us, using it as the backing for everything we do moving forward.

Using research and evidence to shift priorities can create confusion and complication with key partners for animal advocacy organizations. This is especially the case for organizations that merge a pragmatic theory of change, focused on incremental animal welfare improvement, with the inflexible big-picture goal of ending all animal suffering.

And a couple of years ago, we [...] sort of shifted our public position on these incremental animal welfare certifications and launched a campaign focused at raising public awareness about the humane-washing and the impact of meat companies, food and animal companies using deceptive marketing, including

certifications, to deceive the public about the extent of animal suffering and their supply chains [...]. So this is a pretty big shift for us, a shift publicly in the positions we're taking. And that drew a lot of the ire of animal welfare organizations [...]. Similarly, we work with farmers and ranchers pretty regularly, and some of them are pretty unhappy about us promoting meat reduction. So many of them don't like the fact that we say eat as little meat as possible, ideally none. And that, that position carries through in our actions and our policies. But then they also see us standing up for and encouraging institutions and others to support suppliers who are raising animals in the highest welfare conditions. So they also see us probably sometimes as a confusing and imperfect ally.

Building Partnerships And Allies

One theme that emerged across many types of organizations is the idea that in general the animal advocacy movement is too narrowly focused or not interested enough in pragmatic partnerships—with organizations that share some but not all goals of animal advocacy organizations—across other advocacy issues.

We also take an interdisciplinary perspective, which again, is unusual. So we are actively seeking allies in the environmental community, the public health community, the worker justice community. And we have projects explicitly aimed at building allyship and building capacity and political power for groups who are not in the animal advocacy community, who are, but who share the goal of ending factory farming. We've felt for a long time that the animal rights movement, animal welfare movement has limited its political impact and relevance to the public by virtue of being fairly narrowly focused. Of course we want to motivate people to care about nonhuman animals and farmed animals, but there are already lots of people who live in communities where they're impacted directly by factory farms and don't like them, and would like to see them stopped in different ways. And we think those people could and should be allies.

On the other hand, some interview respondents pointed to the lack of interest from other advocacy focal areas in connecting their issues to animal advocacy.

It would seem that environmental groups and us should really agree and get along [...] there are others where they just really don't think that you have to end industrial animal agriculture in order to improve climate change or at least slow climate change in some way. And there are those that just don't think that animal welfare is a worthwhile endeavor, so to speak.

Even though most respondents felt that this lack of allyship is reflective of the animal advocacy movement as a whole, most also felt that their organizations do not stay that narrow in their framing of problems and solutions, and they draw from a wide range of research to create that big tent. A common sentiment among several interview respondents is that “we try not to talk

about animals as much [...] we're very worried about scaring people away [...]. So we've been trying to take the approach of pulling people into our mission rather than pushing them away." Most organizations that expressed this minimizing of animal advocacy as core to their mission do not describe their approach as abolitionist or rooted in Effective Altruism. Instead, like most organizations in the study sample and the animal advocacy space overall, these organizations are, as noted above, cause-inflexible but tactic- and messaging-flexible. This desire to use research and data to support many different entry points into activities that contribute to animal wellbeing is highly pragmatic, not mission drift or a dilution of core values.

Our organization, we don't limit what people's acceptable entry points into diet change are. You know, we are animal advocates. But if someone gets into this for health reasons or climate reasons or racial justice reasons, we don't want to put up any barriers to that.

For some organizations, there is also a proactive orientation toward engaging other allies and bringing animal advocacy tactics and the research behind them to new audiences.

[Our] third goal is what I call movement building. Which is to better train our staff and activists. So our capacity is pretty small and for this strategy to scale, we need to tap into the capacity of climate organizations and health organizations. And we need ways to train them to use plant-based nudges effectively.

A few respondents provided examples of new organizations that have spun off or emerged from existing organizations, based on new research that identified complementary approaches to animal advocacy. These new organizations generally focus on emerging issues—plant-based meats, new species of interest, or place-based direct action campaigns.

Catalyzing Action By Individuals And Institutions

Research and data provide a starting point for campaign communications to the general public, and having an evidence base behind specific statements is critical for most organizations. A consistent sentiment among interview respondents is the idea that using research creates opportunities for internal refining of priorities and provides external legitimacy, but mostly, "we definitely use research as an advocacy tool, and generate our own research as an advocacy tool." Research is used in programming and campaigns for many purposes, including the legitimacy described above and also as a way to connect specific issues to something personal to the audience.

We do a lot of work [...] trying to end the big cat trade and the use of cub petting and things like that. So when we're talking about that, if we can also talk about these things happen here. There were cub petting facilities in the U.S. and luckily many are now stopped because of legislation passed. But [we try] to connect those dots [to] a lot of issues happening here. [To show that] it's not just the international world doing things, but we have our own work to do here

on these same issues. So information [about how] this does happen here or there is always helpful.

With policymakers, pointing to research and evidence can create the additional foundational legitimacy needed to move forward already-shared priorities.

[For] institutional decision makers or public policy makers [...] often the reality is that they are not really actually that interested in the research themselves. They're interested in being able to say that the policy they passed is backed by research. So they want to know that the study exists and they want the study to be legitimate enough that it can stand up to scrutiny, but they don't actually need the study in order to convince them to make the change. They're already on board.

For policy makers, research can also be leveraged to connect animal advocacy to issues with more politically salient issues, mostly focused on climate change and public health.

Getting the government to take action, we do try to connect the dots for them. You know, these countries want rabies control, because that's a huge public health problem and we're trying to explain that the only way you'll be able to really get rabies prevention and control over that is if you end the meat trade [...]. So having them see it as [having] public health importance. Because for a lot of governments and groups too, the animal part is not that important.

The same basic idea is true for the general public, that data can be used to tell a story that resonates across a diversity of dimensions.

We do use data as a call to action [...] most of the narrative there is climate science. So it's very much painting a situation of society, drawing on the latest climate literature, the projections, and the issues that we're facing. And compiling that together in a narrative that [is] taking the data and sticking in a narrative form.

Identifying Problems And Solutions

Research can be used for communication, priority setting, building partnership and catalyzing action by identifying problems and by highlighting possible solutions: “We want to be the solutions organization, but also to really make that case of, this is so bad that we just need to end this practice entirely.” For some organizations, using research to reframe key issues to emphasize the problem is an important starting point for action.

I was in a meeting a couple of weeks ago with a big producer association telling me that cages and animal welfare can go hand in hand. So there will always be denials of, you know, very basic [facts] and very, very immediate things to understand. But the only way to solve this is to have more science to show the multiple aspects of what is wrong.

In campaigns, data on problems is important to get attention, and evidence about solutions or alternatives can then provide a starting point for action.

[We use research in] social media campaigns. And I don't know what we would do if we didn't have this research. I would hate to just be guessing, you know? And saying, oh, we think this is better. It's a nice secure way for us to be like, why not use this? It uses 5,000 less liters of water. It doesn't do this, it doesn't do that. And back it up. I can't say that the public will come to us and say, where did you get that 5,000 liters of water from? What did you do [to get that number]? But really, that's not our aim.

Research and data that points to solutions is especially important when engaging the corporate sector, and much like when communicating to policymakers, solutions that address animal advocacy issues while also relating to a broader business case are more likely to land with private partners.

I think from specifically a food system lens, it's really just getting the right type of research to move businesses in the direction of reducing the amount of animal protein that they're procuring and selling or using in their materials and really making that business case for them, tying it to what they can achieve for their net zero commitments, the 1.5 degrees Celsius commitments, as well as other sustainability commitments they have.

For the few organizations that do work directly with farmers or other individuals in animal-oriented professions, research and evidence can help provide a starting point for conversations about not just the problems, but also the solutions.

Farmers are definitely looking for high-quality information, looking to improve their practices. Obviously [those practices] are typically related to productivity and issues like that, but welfare is, although a novel concept, most farmers understand that animal suffering and pain does not lead to either a high quality product or high yield. So there is that basic link there. So definitely a key audience.

With the general public, the positivity of research and information related to solutions is helpful in maintaining legitimacy. “We talk a lot about evidence-based optimism [...] we are conscious that the element of fear gets thrown out there a lot to get people to make changes.” Many interview respondents expressed an implicit theory of change that sees data and evidence on solutions and alternatives as a means to channeling optimism into action.

We try to make things positive and mainstream rather than negative, aggressive or extreme. We work really hard to stay in that mainstream because we want to get to the maximum amount of people. We don't want people just to think, ‘they're gonna [get angry] again and tell me everything I'm doing is wrong.’ We want them to think, ‘oh yeah. Maybe I could change, maybe I could think about [it], yeah.’

Topics And Focus Of Research Used In Animal Advocacy

Interview respondents reflected on three high-level categories of research consistently used by animal advocacy organizations: research and data on animal welfare and wellbeing, interdisciplinary research that connects animal wellbeing to other domains like climate change and human health, and research on tactics and mechanisms that drive behavior change.

Animal Wellbeing Research

Animal welfare and wellbeing is the inflexible cause that drives most if not all animal advocacy organizations, and yet the concept of wellbeing remains a challenging one for research and evidence to fully operationalize.

Many organizations focus on “*reducing suffering, [but] there's always more science coming out on that and it's tricky.*” Other organizations try to take a more positive framing of welfare as going beyond lack of measurable or visible suffering. However, a lot of animal science research is “*focused on physiology, not welfare. So nothing about behavior, for instance. Which is an important part of welfare.*” Although several interview respondents pointed to the fact that animal sentience is an almost universally accepted concept, understanding animals’ experiences of wellbeing is challenging as both a driver of research and a framing for data analysis and interpretation.

I think PETA, they're not comfortable at all with even using terms like humane slaughter or kinder slaughter because they just don't see that as a real thing. And they don't work on animal welfare improvements. We of course do and think it's important while doing the other work. But I think that really goes to show that there's this kind of discomfort, across the board of everyone recognizing that we are quantifying something that we don't, we can't really completely quantify. We only have available what we can find in terms of science.

Interdisciplinary Research

To increase legitimacy and expand the animal advocacy message, many interview respondents described using research and evidence to take advantage of “strategic opportunities” to connect their mission to issues and events that are more present as social and political concerns. As one respondent put it, their organization uses data to “*cut across multiple social movements. We very much don't narrate ourselves as just the animal space.*” Data and evidence from a wide range of disciplines and research that presents interdisciplinary analyses or interpretations is key to enabling these strategic opportunities.

I'd say most organizations are moving to more of an [...] intersection of issues [...]. One way in which I would narrate it is that, well, we've got a very unique situation where the climate crisis is necessitating transformative change that necessitates massive food system transition towards plant-based [food]. You can normalize that within society to lay the groundwork for, in the future, an

animal rights movement to come through, because people have already accepted the idea that things have got to change.

For organizations whose approaches can encompass a wide variety of entry points into animal advocacy and especially diet change (which generally identify as neither abolitionist nor Effective Altruist), drawing on data from a wide range of disciplines is a powerful way to underscore their own consistent message that diet change is a net positive across a wide range of systems.

So one school board [...]where they have clear ESG commitments, climate commitments, and food [is] nowhere on their website. Hmm. So environment, and ecology, a clear driver [...]. But then I turn around and go to a different school board and systemic racism and inequity and childhood diabetes are a big area of concern for them. And so the drivers get flipped a bit in terms of what becomes the primary, lead argument [...]. It's all research and evidence-based, but it's tailored because we have like a Swiss Army knife here, in terms of what all the research shows for the benefits of plant-based diets and how they can be applied.

In many ways, the focus on interdisciplinarity requires more ongoing engagement with research, because while animal sentience is fairly settled, there are more opportunities to increase legitimacy by linking animal issues to up-to-date research from other disciplines.

I think there's enough for all the different angles, but it always helps the more you can get of the public health, you know, because the animal stuff is pretty hard to refute or, I mean, we have plenty of that evidence [...]. So it's kinda like, all right, if you're gonna take the environment approach or the public health approach, there is information out there, but the more updated and reputable looking, more on that always, always helps to add. Cause I think it's those areas that you need to be continually making the human-animal welfare connection.

Behavioral And Social Change Research

Several interview respondents reflected at length about how their organizations draw on social science research related to individual and social change: “Social science research, I think, is probably some of the most compelling for animal rights, or at least the most relevant now.”

For Effective Altruist and similarly pragmatic organizations, behavioral economics is important as a key data point in assessing efficacy and tractability.

Consumer behavior and economics [is so important]. Reaching price parity is such a huge issue within our movement that we're always interested in any research or information about how that's going [...] and then just consumer behavior about are folks really willing to try plant-based options? Or are folks really willing to pay a little bit more for cage free? I think those are probably the big areas of interest for us in making programmatic decisions.

For organizations with an abolitionist approach and others that focus on individual or social action, the research base on social movements leading to institutional change is very important. Generally this research base comes from outside of the animal advocacy space, and often comes from other social issues that achieved political tractability through mobilization (an interesting reframing of the concept of tractability from Effective Altruism to abolitionism). Although there is not much research about the animal advocacy social movement, many organizations focused on collective actions use research to “*take all of the social science that shows how these mechanisms do work,*” to make the case for their own tactics and approaches.

There's a really interesting study [...] from the anti-abortion movement. Where they found that like 50% of people in the anti-abortion movement were not anti-abortion when they joined the movement. They just were invited by a friend, or maybe it was through their church or something, but they didn't really solidify their beliefs, but then they joined and then they got converted to their beliefs. And so I think that has influenced us a lot, like, just bring people in, who cares what they think right now. Like, you get them to be in your community and take action and they'll probably either leave 'cause they're not into it or [they will] change. So stuff like that I think influences us.

Gaps And Challenges In Existing Research And Evidence

Most interview respondents described their own organizations and animal advocacy organizations as a whole as being research and evidence based in how they set programmatic priorities, frame campaigns, and communicate with a diversity of actors: “*Whenever we have to [make] a new decision or we have to take a position on specific topics, we always go back to what, what the science says.*” Along many axes of interest for animal advocates, there is an adequate and settled evidence base, especially in terms of core mission and proposed solutions. Animal sentience, an established fact for most audiences, is the reason to act. Equally importantly, for virtually all organizations regardless of their public-facing focus area or mission, the solution is already clear and agreed upon: end the use of animals by humans for food, fiber, entertainment, and other purposes.

Research Topics With Gaps

There are some gaps in the knowledge base about specific species and animal management systems, and there is a high degree of variability in the evidence base and its quality across different geographies. Most of the gaps and challenges in the existing research and evidence base identified by interview respondents, however, relate to questions of how to effect change, rather than what to change or why to act.

Animal Wellbeing For Specific Geographies And Species

Interview respondents in organizations focused on the Global South highlighted gaps in the evidence base for species and production systems that are not present in the Global North, or those that have particularly low economic value regardless of their geography. For example, there is very little data of any kind about the needs of native fish species in Southeast and East

Asia. There are also some uses of animals for medicinal and cultural purposes that are highly geographically specific and thus not widely researched—bears used for bile in Southeast Asia, for example.

Part of the challenge in addressing some of these research gaps is a ‘chicken and egg’ problem: without a foundational base of evidence about common species and production systems in a given region, it is difficult to know what to look at next.

It would be hard to evaluate what's a meaningful piece of research and what's a waste of money, especially for a place like China where there's not as many people working or the Philippines or Vietnam, right? What do we need to know about pangasius [fish] in Vietnam right now? I don't know. No one's looked. So in a way, it's like the chicken and the egg almost. It's like organizations need this research to know what to do when they hit the ground, but then someone has to go to the ground to figure out what needs to be known.

The lack of research is especially the case for fish species and aquaculture management, where the existing evidence base is focused on productivity—if there is any evidence at all.

The issue is that there are really some topics where there is no research, especially farmed fish [...]. The vast majority of studies that I have seen, especially I'm talking about studies funded in the European Union with public money. They all have been focused on production levels. None of them was integrating animal welfare standards or KPIs [key performance indicators]. In the best case scenario, the only KPI that was included is mortality rate, which is of course needed, but it's very, very, very, very, very limited.

The legitimacy and potential impact of research from one geography in a different national, political, and social context varies depending on the direction of knowledge translation. In general, the majority of animal welfare research comes from the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. Countries in the Global North will look to research from other similar contexts, but with some skepticism.

For instance, maybe there are some studies and research, but then often, the reply [from the other side is] that the study was conducted in Norway, which is completely different [...] even though pigs [...] are always the same, but never mind.

A few respondents working in organizations focused in the Global North expressed a concern that the solid evidence base developed there would be dismissed as illegitimate or irrelevant in the Global South for the same reasons.

Ten years ago, when more or less I started to do this job, the vast majority of critics were like, 'But this is a Northern Europe or a U.S. study. [Southern Europe] is different.' And if I think of it of regions like Africa for instance, where everything is brand new and where there is a risk that the cages that we are dismissing now in Europe will end up in Africa, for instance. I see it as a likely scenario. The one where African companies say, 'You know, but this is a

European study in Africa. We are different and will prove the cages and welfare get along well.'

Ironically, evidence from the Global North, especially the United States, is often seen as more legitimate in other countries and contexts than within the country that produced it.

[The] U.S. does carry a lot of weight here too. We've worked with Harvard Law School, or Harvard University, and we've had professors or experts from there speak at panels we've done, which could be with other international experts. So that carries a lot of weight internationally and here. It's funny because the U.S. is just so skeptical of everything, you know? [...] [In the Global South] they might even give more credence to us experts in science and things there than we even do here of our own government.

For many countries in the Global South that are the focus of local or international animal advocacy organizations, although research from the Global North might be seen as legitimate, it is often not relevant to the production systems or the species of interest. Instead, there is an extreme lack of information about many species of global importance that are not common in the Global North.

But especially when you're looking at the welfare of, like, species in India [...] I think maybe we found one paper that had [...] the main species we work with [...]. so this is something that the movement will have to grapple with if we want to take seriously helping the majority of farm[ed] fish. I mean, China represents somewhere in the region of 60% of farm[ed] fish in the world.

Most respondents who work in organizations focused on the Global South or globally emphasized the need for diversification and expansion in research capacity and the evidence base for animal advocacy, especially as it relates to food systems.

So much of the research is coming out of the U.S. and Europe and the majority of the animals being slaughtered for food are not in the U.S. and Europe, they're in India, Brazil is the largest beef exporter, and Southeast Asia. So that's a really hard nut to crack. But I do think we need to start thinking more globally about how we're going to get research out of those countries as far as consumer behavior or cultural traditions. What is driving this incredible uptick of farming animals in China, for example. Because it's great that we're doing good research in the U.S. but if that's, if we're not the biggest piece of the pie, then we're not actually going to be able to move the needle globally.

Building a global evidence base for animal advocacy will require addressing some key challenges to geographic specificity, including the overall orientation of researchers toward animal wellbeing topics and the quality of research training and thus of research products. In some countries, for example, the research publication process is not sufficiently rigorous.

We struggle sometimes because we think we found something golden and then we're like, oh, no, it didn't get [peer-reviewed] [...]. We've sent things to [our

academic partners] but they've struggled to incorporate the Chinese references because of that peer-review. And they've also said the same for [movement] reports, other organization reports [...] the scientists have struggled to use them because they're not that academic quality that they're looking for. It hasn't been as smooth as I had hoped. It's the first time we've done it, and yeah, it was quite a shock to be told that we're not quite at that quality that they're looking for.

In the Global North, animal welfare takes second place to productivity or economic gain for many researchers and individuals working in the animal industry, but the basic concepts of animal welfare are generally familiar to and accepted by researchers, policymakers, and the general public. In the Global South, there is a need to build both evidence and a welfare orientation as animal production systems expand in those regions.

The priority is really to build up [a] group of scientists and researchers who can [...] work on these topics [...] to work ahead of things and, you know, identify a couple of universities in Africa which can start working on welfare, and also then develop the mindset within the academics in Africa and the mindset within the society.

Impact Of Social Movements

Many interview respondents for this study emphasized the need for the animal advocacy movement to better understand how to catalyze change at both societal and individual levels. Respondents who work at organizations with an abolitionist approach were much more specific than other respondents in the gaps they see in the social movements research and evidence base; however, there was a broader and more consistent theme of a need to understand the efficacy and impact of animal advocacy tactics over space and time.

For abolitionist and similar direct action organizations, the relevance of social movements research comes directly from their stated missions and theories of change, which focus on disrupting whole systems to create the space for transformative change.

[Our mission] isn't [focused] on trying to get like this person to go vegan and this person to go vegan. We're trying to change systems, social systems, the way our society views animals. And then of course, like laws and legislation, we do that by building a mass movement of people who can put pressure from the outside on institutions.

However, research and evidence on the long-term impacts of disruptive tactics is limited, and short-term measurements of the impacts of disruption do not necessarily focus on metrics of success that reflect the missions of these organizations. There are major challenges associated with identifying and measuring relevant indicators of impact of different social movement tactics and appropriate timescales for measuring those impacts. The potential power of social movements research for the animal advocacy space is that it can replace time for space, so to speak, by looking at the efficacy of many different tactics happening at the same time in different places, rather than incrementally documenting short-term changes in a single system over time.

A research agenda focused on comparative outcomes of many different tactics could take advantage of the natural experiment that is the diversity of organizations working in animal advocacy.

Research is kind of almost biased against—because of the types of research approaches that are being taken—the power of disruption. And I mean disruption in a broad sense, I don't mean it purely in the civil disobedience sense, but in the sense of surfacing conflict and engaging in conflict. I'd say the [animal advocacy] movement is quite conflict averse. And is more often about putting across things that are in the short-term likely to achieve positive impressions from people. And you know, when you kind of raise things that are a bit more controversial or maybe a bit more bold and truth-telling in terms of actually what you want to say, often you get kickback first and you actually have to work through that conflict in order for that transformation to happen [...] it's very hard to measure things [...]. You can't quite tell if something that happened two years ago, to what extent change has happened [...]. [Instead] it's almost like you do this and then a few weeks after what are people's reactions to it [...]. And that just will inevitably make it look like anything that's a bit controversial or disruptive is bad, [because] the initial reaction is a negative one.

For organizations with missions that reflect both pragmatism and idealism – “in an ideal world, animals wouldn't be used or eaten, but we want to help animals that are in these current conditions at the same time” – the challenge is how to apply lessons from social movements about the impacts of both incremental and transformative change. As one respondent noted, “If there were theoretically studies that could capture the complexity of how people actually make decisions, that would be one thing. But that's not feasible.”

There are also specific research gaps around communication, framing, and rhetoric that can drive individual and institutional decision making. One area identified as needing more study is how to link individual behavior change to social movement framings of collective action. One respondent described a study from Pax Fauna that looked at the “futility argument,” which deters individual action if people think that they are the only ones who will change, and highlights the efficacy of starting with collective action ([Pax Fauna, 2022](#)). Studies like this demonstrate that “there's a lot of work to be done to see the power and the potential [of] the collective.”

Efficacy Of Behavioral Nudges

One of the most common bodies of research and knowledge referenced by interview respondents relates to behavioral nudges, the social science literature on ways to shift individual decision making. Some of those gaps are topical—what reframed behavior is being studied and in which contexts.

There's been some pretty big gaps in behavioral nudge research. Most of it that has dealt with plant-based diets is only done research in like, vegetarian shifts

and not completely vegan or plant-based shifts. Most of it's taken place in event-style food services. And so there were gaps in research, like what about dining halls? What about these restaurants? What about other kinds of institutions?

Most organizations interested in this evidence base highlighted the need to not only expand understanding of the efficacy of specific nudges, but more importantly to translate the evidence for use at the institutional and policy levels.

I think that's probably an area where movement can grow the fastest or have the biggest impact is the diffusion of research and knowledge and best practices in the realm of policy [...]. Like behavioral research, nudge studies. Anything to do with food environments really. Changing the choice architecture.

Research In The Real World

A few interview respondents discussed the need for a more systems-level approach in research structure and results, to make the findings and the evidence base more relevant in the real world.

The main challenge when reading some studies, especially when they are about, not so much consumers or people [...] but more on-farm studies, is actually the experimental design in the sense that many studies are not conducted with on-farm standards of what an actual farm is. That means for instance, that they are carried out in a research barn [...] and the criteria that they use in terms of stocking density or maybe air quality or these kinds of things. Most of the time they're not comparable to what happens on-farm.

Research Characteristics That Create Challenges

In addition to specific topical gaps, the research from which animal advocacy organizations can and do draw has characteristics that makes its translation and application challenging. These included the multidimensional nature of the food system and the complexity of research related to its impact, a lack of evidence from evaluation-type studies about what does and, crucially, does not work with respect to changing behavior and reducing animal suffering, and an overall lack of quality research in many specific areas.

Complex Or Ambiguous Findings

One main challenge in using complex or ambiguous research is translating the “so what” for application in campaigns and communication, because “*it needs to be super easy to understand. It needs to be super easy to absorb, otherwise you've lost them in three seconds.*” Focusing on solutions and alternatives, especially in the diet change space, is one approach that interview respondents consistently described as a way to apply ambiguous or varied findings on a specific topic, especially related to human health and behavior change.

You can find studies saying dairy is healthy, saying meat is healthy, just like [studies that say] they're unhealthy. But nobody's, yeah, let's get more cows because the methane is great for the planet. There's a lot more in our favor and kind of the pushback is more like, well, humans need to eat. So it's kind of taking a different approach because it's proving that, or suggesting that there are alternatives that still provide the same like nutrient equity and things like that.

One specific source of ambiguity identified by several interview respondents focused on abolitionist approaches is the challenge of specifically characterizing suffering or wellbeing for sentient beings that cannot communicate. However, for these organizations, the ambiguity associated with suffering actually underscores the need for the precautionary principle, which points to a default position of avoiding harm or suffering.

I personally am more comfortable with the gray area and the ambiguity because being black and white about these things when you're dealing with sentient beings and trying to characterize their suffering and their lived experience is really, really tricky. So as much as we can be comfortable in that gray area, I actually think that's a good thing on the animal welfare side.

Insufficient Evidence From Evaluation Studies On Tactics

An unexpected and consistent theme from several interview respondents was the desire for more data and evidence from evaluation studies to be made available at all, and especially in peer-reviewed or more rigorous research formats: *"I think there's a huge hole in the research that our community does, which is applied research, rigorous applied research we might call program evaluation research."* The gap that exists right now was framed by respondents as creating a lack of sharing about what works in terms of tactics to effect change, and equally or more importantly, what doesn't work.

Examples of specific topics include evidence of the long-term impacts of disruptive change, which some organizations might be reluctant to share because of the ambiguity of findings, or the unintended consequences of certain messaging that might actually lead to more meat consumption overall.

We want to be able to measure what we're doing. We want to be able to adapt and change. And even if it's wrong [a specific tactic], I'd rather that was published by a scientist and then it might help other people who are also trying to start up this kind of thing and they'll avoid some of the pitfalls that we've made and, you know, find better ways. I'd rather do that than sort of say, oh, we got it wrong, and just keep it to ourselves.

There are many reasons why evaluation work might not be published. It takes resources and capacity, and as noted above, timelines that are longer than many standard research efforts in order to link data on actions to data on impacts.

I think there's, there's just places like that in the animal movement where we just need a concerted research effort to build a foundational understanding of how to have an impact. There's a need for people to kind of stick it out with research to kind of build an evidence base that we can then start actual understanding what we're doing and whether it's having an impact. Evaluation of our impact really goes hand in hand with research, and currently both of them are neglected. No one's really trying hard enough to understand our impact and no one's really trying hard enough to kind of do the research needed to make that [happen].

Respondents described wanting to publish more of their own organizations' evaluation work in order to share specific learnings about efficacy and impact, and to drive their own internal process: *"That kind of introspection and use of research and use of program evaluation to inform future strategy is something that I'd love to see more of."* More generally, the insufficiency of evaluation evidence like this has created fundamental gaps in understanding the overall efficacy of the movement.

If the question is 'are we getting closer or further from the end of factory farming, and is our work getting us closer or further from that,' are we actually asking those questions of any of the programs or strategies we pursue? Maybe that's being done confidentially and it is being done as program evaluation work that just doesn't get published. But if it is, I don't see it.

Other respondents draw a comparison between more theoretical research that happens related to the Effective Altruism approach in particular, and the need for applied research questions and processes to reflect 'the real world.' There's also the reality that the types of evidence generally collected for evaluation purposes, like in-depth interviews or ethnographic observation of actual decision-making (as opposed to surveys of what people say they will do) are difficult to collect for animal advocates. This point builds from the research gaps related to operationalizing and quantifying animal wellbeing, which is a difficult concept to move from theory to practice.

Our organization doesn't really do much monitoring and evaluation [...]. A lot of that comes out of just a bad research base [with respect to impact on animals]. A lot of that comes out of an inability to really know what's going on, when we try and make improvements to the lives of animals.

Finally, a challenge for many animal advocacy organizations, especially those thinking about the impacts of their work from a social change point of view, is the lack of evidence that clearly establishes a causal link between their activities and their intended outcomes. Well-designed evaluation studies that test causation take time and resources, but give organizations the evidence they need to explain and expand their impact.

What we're looking at is the influence [of our work] and its correlative data. Obviously we can't prove causation [...]. For us, most of our concern is showing that what we're doing is effective advocacy. And there's some research we can point to and a lot of it's tangential, but [...] we're the only ones really doing this.

It would be really helpful to be able to go to funders and say, 'Hey, look, like we know this works. We're practicing this thing that is proven.' But of course, since that hasn't been done, we can't do that. So for us, that's the research we would really want.

Overall Research Capacity And Quality

Although most interview respondents noted that there is a solid evidence base from which they and their colleagues draw on many topics, there was also a general reflection that there are often gaps in the research base needed by specific animal advocacy organizations, and a lack of capacity to rigorously address these gaps.

[One example of studying food purchasing data] was really cool because it was this third-party verification rather than relying on people and what they say and what surveys they fill out and so on. So, I don't know, that's a thought there. Maybe it [would] be better to invest in fewer studies, but more robust or reliable or more expensive.

There are broader resource issues in fields that directly intersect with animal advocacy, especially those related to human nutrition. Several interview respondents noted the lack of clinical rigor in most nutrition studies, and the way that those limitations are not always acknowledged equally by the meat industry and the animal advocacy industry.

I feel like the problems that we run into is when we're looking at nutrition, for example [...]. The problem is more in the flaws of nutrition research as a whole and not necessarily in plant-based. So you're looking at a lot of cohort studies instead of a randomized control trial [...]. I feel like something that I struggle with is translating the flaws of research in general and that it applies to all research, not just plant-based research. Because it can be easy for a carnivore or somebody in the media who doesn't like our mission to say, well, here's all these flaws. Well, if you look at your research, those flaws are there as well, the flaws are across the board.

Finding And Utilizing Research And Evidence

The knowledge translation process includes the conceptualization, execution, and sharing of research and evidence, but as the literature makes very clear, passive 'sharing' is only the starting point for accessing and utilizing research results. In interviews, respondents discussed challenges and opportunities associated with the downstream stages of knowledge translation. These stages or steps include finding and accessing research findings, vetting the source and the content of the research, preferred formats and framing of translated information, and interpreting and applying information.

Accessing Information

Awareness of new information tends to come from listservs within the animal advocacy space, networks of people working on similar topics, and trusted researchers who are looking out for new information relevant to the specific organizations to which they are connected. Relationships are key to identifying and accessing new information. As one person summarized it, *“I do have to rely on a lot of others seeing that information in the news and then sharing it.”*

Relationships that facilitate awareness of and access to information exist within the animal advocacy community and include formalized information sharing like the newsletters sent out by Faunalytics, Impactful Animal Advocacy, and others as well as informal alerts when an organization has produced or seen something new that is relevant to other allied organizations. Because there are so many angles to entering and framing animal advocacy, many individuals also *“have their own niche,”* with listservs outside of animal advocacy that are specific to law, human nutrition, climate change, and many other disciplines and topics. Google Alerts are also a common way that advocates identify new and emerging information of interest.

Accessing research outputs that have been published but not further translated is challenged first and foremost by paywalls on academic and industry literature. Over and over, interview respondents described needing to access peer-reviewed literature through spouses, friends, and past colleagues, or through academic partners on their boards of directors. Access to industry-produced data is also cost-prohibitive.

Access to data is a problem too. We don't have the budgetary resources to necessarily pay for membership to some of these like data sources and things of that nature. Like supply chain and market data and those sort of things. We have paid for annual market reports in the past, but they can be upwards of five to seven thousand dollars [...]. We tend to pay for articles when they are paywall on a case-by-case basis. We have some workarounds sometimes, particularly our assistant-level staff or others might still have university email accounts and then they can kind of go through their university library still and get access to articles outside of paywalls. Or people have some personal ways to kind of get access to articles. So usually we can find a workaround and if not [...] we will just pay for single use.

Most interview respondents described their and their colleagues' processes for finding new information and research as passive or opportunistic, in part because of a lack of time and in part because of the volume of information crossing their radar every day.

I get the Faunalytics newsletter, I get their communications of various kinds. I scan it, we'll see if there's anything immediately relevant for something we're working on. We'll keep it in mind, you know, our team definitely follows it. We will go to some of their research presentations.

When there are specific information needs—*“for instance, when we are to update a position or where we are going to, when we receive a question where we don't have already a definite answer”*—many organizations have the expertise and capacity to do more targeted review and

accessing of research either themselves or with the help of supporters (e.g., board members). Accessing information to meet these more specific and focused needs is often a form of knowledge translation itself, in which staff of animal advocacy organizations review the evidence base, identify and summarize key data points, situate those in a framework that creates meaning for the intended audience. Much of that knowledge translation work is not recognized formally as such and is instead part of the role of a communications staff member or a campaigns lead. Much of that work also remains internal only, with the final product being included in a press release, campaign content, or annual report, but not communicated out in a way that ‘shows all of the work’ that went into information synthesis.

Vetting Information

As described above, most interview respondents described their organization’s use of research and data as being a clear marker of legitimacy with almost all audiences. However, the source of the research matters for both internal and external legitimacy, and there is some nuance in how and why organizations vet different sources and types of information depending on the purpose and the audience.

Part of the legitimacy that comes from being a research-informed organization comes from a perception of objectivity in research; the goal then is *“finding research that helps prove your point, but doesn’t sound so biased [as information coming from the animal advocacy movement].”* In general, peer-reviewed publications from researchers at Global North universities are seen as having the highest level of objectivity, and are therefore valuable for communicating with policymakers, the media, and much of the general public. As one respondent described it, *“I always want to seem as mainstream as possible. So when I see a study that’s from a university or in a journal, you know, that goes further for me.”*

In contrast, research coming from the animal advocacy movement is often seen as more biased, but also can be much more relevant. On the one hand, *“I know that folks at Faunalytics and Sentience, they’re interested in truth. Which is honestly rare. It’s rare in general, and it’s really rare in our movement. You know, I see [a vegan organization], I’m not gonna trust anything they put out about their research.”* On the other hand, research from the movement can be more immediately vetted for motives and other influences and is also often seen as more relevant because of a shared common starting point.

We need things to be published in other places so that folks outside of our movement trust them, but then on the other hand, folks within our movement, like myself and my colleagues, we do trust the stuff that’s coming out of the movement.

For most organizations, there is a need to vet and balance various sources of information to maintain legitimacy across audiences.

I think there’s certain organizations, [large international conservation non-governmental organizations], a lot of those I find very reputable and when they do research or present information, I feel comfortable trusting that. Hopefully our supporters do too [...]. If they’re already animal supporters, then

they probably would. But then maybe other skeptical ones would see more standing in well-known academic institutions again. So I guess trying to have that combo.

Research led or funded by the animal agriculture industry is more ambiguous in its value to animal advocacy organizations, even though it often engages university researchers as well. On the one hand, industry approaches most animal welfare topics with too much of a productivist lens for animal advocacy organizations to trust it. For example, *“there are new methods for things like slaughter or confinement coming out all the time. [...] We have to be very scrupulous in how we approach it, because we have to be suspicious of anything the industry says is the new good thing.”* On the other hand, industry data is more readily accepted by many audiences not currently engaged with animal advocates, and using it can expand external legitimacy: *“We find that if we’re using information directly from the industry, it cannot be disputed. So as much as I hate it, I’m always looking at industry reports. I’m looking at industry publications and also government news releases and things like that.”*

Who funded the research is an equally or more important characteristic against which to vet the findings than is the official lead researcher and their affiliation. Industry funding is always suspect, and for respondents in several Global North countries, government-funded research is as well: *“I hate to say this, it’s really sad to think about it now, but anything from a government agency, we’re gonna question.”* The relationship between industry and government entities complicates the legitimacy of information coming from both sources.

I think that so much of the research that is being done is by industry [...]. There’s not been a lot of scrutiny on that because the government funds the industry to do this research. And then obviously the research results are used to keep the industry powerful and there’s not a lot of scrutiny that happens in between all that.

For the most part, the skepticism about funders relates to a general de-emphasis on animal welfare and complete disinterest in animal rights from industry and government entities, but also a more general observation about bias.

If it’s someone that we know or if it’s a body that we know and they seem to be independent, obviously we’ll put a lot more trust in that than if it’s something that is funded by the meat and livestock [national industry] [...]. They’ll say that the research has been done independently, it’s never really independent if it’s funded with someone that wants to find a particular outcome.

Some interview respondents reflected on bias differently, noting that all research has some a priori assumptions and thus bias built in, and that most data can be interpreted and translated in many ways. For these individuals and their organizations, vetting new information is less about the source and more about the rigor of the research methods used. As one respondent put it, *“I care more about the methodology and whether I think I can glean useful, reliable knowledge from the methodology rather than who funded it or who’s behind it.”* Specific methodological

concerns include sample size, sample bias, controlling for complexity, and outcome variables that reflect the priorities of animal advocacy organizations.

Vetting research that comes from the Global South is complex and relates to some of the geographic gaps described above. To address these quality issues, animal advocacy organizations take a few different approaches. For some, triangulation is key to ensuring research legitimacy: *"We notice that data is very unreliable in China. So whenever we use data, we make sure we've got three sources to verify and, and stick with that."* In other settings, the goal is to find research sources that have been vetted and are trusted locally, which increases the legitimacy of the animal advocacy organizations using those data in local and national settings. Organizations that are based in the Global North but work in the Global South have an additional layer of both vetting and being vetted for legitimacy in local settings: *"There's a cultural thing at play specifically in sub-Saharan Africa. And you know, us being an international NGO also adds that kind of bias to any conversation."*

Interpreting And Applying Information

Research and data are identified, interpreted and applied in programming, communication, and planning by animal advocacy organizations for many reasons, as described above. Regardless of the purpose—to build legitimacy or partnerships, to identify solutions or catalyze action—knowledge translation is an active process that culminates not in press releases or fact sheets, but through interpretation and application of the information to specific actions.

For animal advocacy organizations, interpreting and applying information supports ongoing learning and further knowledge translation: *"We will start with something like that and say, okay, what did they find? What did they find? What research are they looking at? And then kind of use that to guide where we want to go next."* Knowledge translation also includes interpreting and incorporating information that is not perfectly aligned or even contradicts their mission and vision into the learning process. For most organizations, counterpoint research is not threatening—*"it's not like one study is gonna shut down my organization."* Instead, including opposing data points in the evidence base for campaigns and communication is part of how research can generate overall external legitimacy.

When we look at research, we admittedly cherry pick a little bit, but we try not to cherry pick. Sure. Because there is some research showing that maybe dairy's beneficial. Okay. And if we're not addressing that, then people won't look at us as an objective educational resource.

One specific point of variation for organizations is how to present research and evidence that have already been translated. For some organizations, dramatic statements and statistics can reinforce campaign narratives. From the perspective of many interview respondents, having solid numbers is more than enough, since they can speak for themselves. As one respondent explained, *"a lot of people tend to exaggerate, which makes no sense when it's so bad. You don't need to exaggerate anything,"* especially if exaggeration opens a campaign up to being described as not grounded in evidence. A few respondents expressed that inaccurate interpretation and possible exaggeration of data and evidence is not the fault of those actors

doing and translating research, but instead is the result of “*advocacy groups that don't actually know how to evaluate and use research.*”

Interpretation can be a challenge for organizations looking to add data points and evidence from fields far outside their own theory of change and practice areas: “*I would say just if there's a topic that I'm not well versed on, it can be hard to read research.*” However, knowledge translation in many animal advocacy organizations is really about developing the ability to interpret research. “*When we're looking at so many different topics and we really try to look at every angle in this movement, we will never be experts in everything. I wouldn't say I'm an expert in anything to begin with. I just know how to read a lot of research.*” The main barrier to interpretation, then, is not expertise per se, but the capacity and crucially, the time to take in and integrate a wide array of information.

So I'd say [there are] practical barriers [to knowledge application]. When you're in the thick of it, it's very hard to get time to pull your head out and read some books. So we are trying to really embed cycles, like action learning cycles, activity and then space to learn and reflect. And we're really trying to get into a space where we can both be thinking and doing.

Form Of Translated Information

Cutting across the process of accessing, vetting, and interpreting research and evidence is the question of what form of information is most useful to animal advocacy organizations. In short: a little bit of everything.

The more nuanced explanation offered by interview respondents is that due to time, resource, and capacity constraints, the preferred form includes both breadth and depth. That is, they don't want to lose the specificity of original research methods and full results, but they want the key takeaways and the pathways that lead to them to be boiled down to the most precise and integrated set of information that links cause or actions to outcomes. They also want forms of knowledge translation that link across disparate bodies of research and data, which increases both efficient and accurate access to information.

There have definitely been times when we've gotten research from another organization or another outlet and we've reached out and said like, Hey, do you have more information you could share about this? But then there have been other times where it's just like, this is way too in the weeds. Like, give me the takeaways, what should I know? So that's probably not a super helpful answer, but I think it's a question that we're still grappling with and trying to figure out.

Much like the characteristics of original research influence its legitimacy and thus relevance for different internal and external uses, the preferred form of translated research and data varies depending on when and how it is used in an organization's process. When early in the learning process about a new topic, geography, or part of the system, “*it was useful to have some of those overview research documents that exist.*” However, as organizations set or deepen their priorities and activities in specific domain areas, “*we pretty quickly kind of outgrew them in terms of needing to specialize into a specific problem that those things didn't really address.*” Many

forms of knowledge translation seem more oriented toward an educated non-expert audience, not research-based organizations that are already deep in the weeds on specific issues.

[A recent publication was a] very 101 kind of article, sort of a background about the consolidation of the dairy industry and the ways in which that likely impacts dairy cows. This is a great primer. But you know, if I'm gonna cite something like this, or if I'm working on a report about the organic dairy industry, I'm gonna have to go a lot deeper than this.

One limitation of the knowledge translation framework is that it assumes that the collection and analysis of evidence, whether in a formal research study or in other types of systematic inquiry, leads to a clear and well-defined piece of knowledge. While that might be true for some topics and types of results that are relevant for animal advocacy, more often what is needed is integration across multiple bodies of research and data. For animal advocacy organizations that take an interdisciplinary approach to situating and communicating their mission, evidence summaries and research reviews that synthesize one or more disparate topics or disciplinary approaches to an issue are incredibly helpful. Reviews and summaries are helpful for engaging the private sector, where *“they're always asking us like, what is the evidence? What is the research behind this? And so that's in that corporate engagement space, that's really where the research summaries in particular come into play.”*

The research summarization approach is how many respondents described the role that Faunalytics plays in the knowledge translation ecosystem: *“I like what they're trying to do, and I like that they compile research and all of that. It's fantastic that there is a space where people can go and access things.”* This approach to knowledge translation is further enhanced by forms that remain detailed but are written in plain language. *“Not being a researcher or a scientist, sometimes it is hard to read the more academic articles and reports [...] It would be easier if things were just in layman's terms, then we don't have to kind of try and decipher [the findings].”* Making the language accessible not only supports the application of knowledge by advocacy organizations but also enables solutions-oriented actions by individuals.

Honestly these [approaches] are not [complicated]. When you use words like behavioral nudges, people think you need a PhD to do this, but it's like, no, you can throw a dinner party and do this.

Some interview respondents expressed frustration with research summaries and similarly broad forms of knowledge translation: *“If white papers were the solution to ending factory farming, we definitely would've done it by now. I cannot believe the amount of money that is spent on white papers.”* Instead, more detailed and action-oriented interpretations are more likely to lead to impact, especially with the private sector. However, most organizations do not have the capacity to synthesize information in ways that effectively restart the knowledge translation process.

As much as we can put forward evidence-based modeling of your workforce and your labor issues, your emissions, your water footprint, et cetera, et cetera, are all going to have net benefits from switching your protein suite on your menu, or on your retail shelves, from animals to non-animal sources, et cetera,

et cetera. That's something that we would ambitiously really love to create ourselves, but I don't think we have the expertise or the bandwidth.

Another key challenge identified by interview respondents is the lack of research consensus around numbers. *"Some people tell you 70 billion farmed or 70 billion animals are killed a year. Some people tell you 90. It's big, big discrepancies. I think it's partially not settled. I think it changes a lot. I think a lot of it's not easy."* Having single data points that have been vetted and are backed by a knowledge translation process is very useful for certain approaches and needs of animal advocacy organizations. *"In terms of articles and writing it really is helpful to have statistics and I go to Faunalytics a lot for that. They have 'by the numbers' kind of analysis of how many, you know, how many rats are in labs or these kinds of things."* Vetted numbers and statistics are also important for organizations focused on advocacy through education.

Right now our bread and butter focus would be what statistics can we give to students, that they can access, that are vetted and that will help them make decisions and learn the issues. So in that sense, more easily digestible, graphs, charts, that kind of thing.

Organization-Led Research And Knowledge Translation

In addition to utilizing research in its many translated forms, most interview respondents described their own organizations as doing some of their own research and knowledge translation. The scope of research led by advocacy organizations varies widely, from very small surveys to large studies, and led by organization staff members, consultants, or university collaborators. *"I wish there were some grand philosophy, but I would say that it's entirely opportunistic. I mean, we do research when we see it's needed, basically, is the short answer."*

Addressing Research And Knowledge Gaps

For the most part, primary research led by advocacy organizations is oriented toward filling specific gaps in the applied evidence base, and with an eye toward movement building. A few interview respondents characterized their organizations doing their own research as a fall-back option to address gaps and not their preference: *"So our bar's pretty low at this point. We're an implementation charity who's decided sure, we have to do our own efficacy research into interventions."* However, most respondents described making pragmatic decisions about cost and the purpose of data collection, and using their own internal resources when possible.

We conduct our own research when it's fairly simple. [...] This spring we helped two student groups at two different universities do pilots of oat milk by default at their campus cafe. We didn't bring any outside help for that. We just kind of guided them in how to do that and are collecting the data. We're gonna publish a report at the end of the year, but that's a fairly simple research project. And so sometimes that's really our bigger goal. And if, if we do that, we're not gonna spend a hundred thousand dollars on paying a PhD researcher of course to do that.

Even in the large organizations interviewed for this study, research departments or teams are not common. Instead, many organizations have some combination of part-time staff, board members, and supporters who have the skills to support data collection and analysis: “*We have a bunch of academics on our team and in our board.*” Several respondents also discussed how their relationships with academics are used to inform and guide research that is useful to their existing priorities.

We've done [research] with a couple of universities, but for the most part it's more been our researchers have these relationships with other academics, where they know this is their area of focus, they have an interest in certain things and students who are interested in this. And so really our role in it is to say, this would be helpful to actual systems changes that we are working on. We just need more information and something to be able to point to in terms of a publication.

Knowledge Translation Form And Purpose

By definition, for most advocacy organizations, doing any type of research from program evaluation to animal welfare to diet change and social movements, leading the knowledge translation for external use is the hardest step. For most, “*translation's the hardest part, honestly, because it's the most time consuming, and it's the work that you often don't get paid for. And I would say we probably translate to the public, I don't know, 20% of what we do. Maybe as high as 35%, or, but not 50%.*” Respondents at all sizes of organizations discussed the time and resource constraints they face in fully engaging in knowledge translation when they and their colleagues do lead their own research.

Once we've got that research, the big job is to break it down into the key messages that will inform the campaigns that we're going to take on and help support [...]. We do that when we think it's really necessary and useful, and also often when someone's paying us to help us offset the time to do it, because it's expensive. It's time-consuming work. Yeah. And it usually comes after you've already done the work. It's like you've already done the project and you've used it for its instrumental purpose, and so then to make it publicly available. It's just another phase that sometimes happens. But not always.

Several respondents also reflected on the most useful form of knowledge translation, especially when they are primarily thinking about engaging public audiences rather than other organizations, but also wanting to maintain detail and dynamic options. There is a general feeling that “*cold and dry PDFs*” are not the most impactful form of knowledge translation for catalyzing action. Instead, both more targeted content—“*should we release the raw data? Should we let them toggle to what they want? It all depends on the audience*”—and more emotive presentations can be engaging to diverse audiences.

It's interesting because we can release something or publish something that is horrible, you know, footage or photos or, or things like that. And it's very, very easy for someone to see that. And it obviously evokes an emotional response

from them straight away. But if we release a, or publish a report, then the amount of people that will actually download and read that report is like a tiny, tiny, tiny fraction of the audience that might watch a video or you know, look at a, a post online or something, so. I think definitely within our supporters and our immediate audience there's not often a lot of uptake on sort of research results.

A few interview respondents highlighted the great importance of animal advocacy organizations and researchers making all data and evidence as accessible and transparent as possible, as a way to increase legitimacy.

With such a David and Goliath story of our movement versus Big Ag, I think that having all of that data be somewhat open-source or at least available upon request is really important because we're just always gonna be doubted, we're always gonna be questioned, we're always gonna be second guessed. So I do think it's important that we're not keeping things too close to the vest, and if needed, we make it available. I'm just not sure that always having it be available right with the release of new research is serving us either.

Many organizations also engage in the knowledge translation process further downstream from primary research, when they review and integrate an existing set of studies and then frame it to further meet the needs of their audiences. These audiences can be other organizations:

And where it really gets fun and powerful is when you have the capacity or willingness to find organizations that you either respect, admire, or want to change, and kind of feed them the research in a way that serves them. So, you know, you're going for communal win all the time, but I tailor my messaging and, and what research to share based on the organization's ambitions, values or goals.

The audiences can also be the general public looking for solutions or ways to take action. Some organizations focus on supporting public exploration of the research through curated databases.

There's a behavior and tension gap, and people want to do better. They read headlines, unfortunately, sometimes just the headline, but some people do go through the studies. So we exist for people who do want to go through that research, to connect the dots to be able to look at the broader picture and, and connect all the different latest findings out there that they can.

Finally, targeted or purposive knowledge translation can be for the media. This often involves “packaging other people's research” in a way that will be able to contribute to the journalistic process, and is distinct from translation for many other audiences.

So the idea that you're gonna put out materials that are gonna be passively found by journalists, yes. That may happen very occasionally, but more realistically you're gonna have to produce something for a very particular reason, and you're gonna have to pitch multiple times. And you're gonna have

to catch people at the right moment when they're already thinking about the story and thinking about the information that's relevant in that story.

Opportunities For Improvement Throughout The Knowledge Translation Cycle

Looking across all of the motivations, strengths, and challenges for knowledge translation to support animal advocacy discussed by interview respondents, a few clear and consistent opportunities emerge for improving the cycle. Very few respondents discussed wishing their organizations could do more research themselves. From a resource and expertise point of view, collecting truly new data and engaging in rigorous analysis and reporting is not the strength or the primary purpose of advocacy organizations. Instead, input into the research programs of academics, government, and possibly even industry would be a more efficient and reliable way to expand the evidence base. Many respondents also discussed the desire to maximize scarce resources by improving collaboration and information sharing with other animal advocacy organizations all along the knowledge translation pathway. This would ensure non-duplicative efforts and potentially expand the relevance of research projects beyond a single organization's footprint. Finally, although the research integration and curation platforms that do exist are very much appreciated, respondents shared ideas about ways to expand and enhance the presentation of information to further increase accessibility.

Collaboration In Setting Research Priorities

Many interview respondents emphasized the opportunity that exists in connecting animal advocacy organizations and their needs to the skills and interests of researchers, as a first step in the knowledge translation process that increases the likelihood that the topics and framing and approaches to research will be useful to organizations. One person mentioned the Tiny Beam Fund and the research prioritization exercises they do to identify 'burning questions.' This concept of sharing and setting research agendas, is of great interest to many organizations. It could look like a virtual convening of organizations and researchers, "*some sort of open space [...] for NGOs and university in general to share their respective needs,*" or a more structured creation of a shared research agenda and even a meta-theory of change, that is inclusive of but bounded by the diversity of tactics and approaches taken by animal advocacy organizations.

I think we could do a better job of having long-term visions as to what research needs to be achieved. I'd be super excited about sitting down with a few groups and outlining a research agenda. Like what are the big questions that we have in some ways? You know, we don't have clear theories of change that we're working towards. We don't have long-term visions for what this movement's trying to achieve. And we kind of need that. Then we need to make a research plan or a research agenda around that. Then that research agenda needs to be funded. It will change a million times, I'm sure, but to my eye, if we don't try, then we're just not gonna get anywhere.

Collaboration in setting research priorities could also be related to curation of existing resources, where there are lists of interested researchers, and mechanisms to connect researchers with organizations: “*I wish there were somebody who could run ideas that I come up with [...] if there was a way to submit those ideas so that someone could run with 'em.*” This relates to having a shared research agenda and could be bidirectional, with organizations putting research ideas out there for researchers to pick up, or a list of research entities that align with the animal advocacy mission and could be contacted about specific new ideas.

I think that it would be good to just have a very clear picture of who are the individual researchers or the research firms that are out in this space that have interest, capacity and bandwidth to take on research for particularly animal welfare or conservation and environmental food systems issues. And almost like a database of people we can go to and their contact information, um, to even start having some of these conversations.

Coordination In Research And Knowledge Translation

In addition to increased and systematic collaboration between researchers and animal advocacy organizations, many interview respondents also emphasized the need for more coordination among organizations. At a basic level, coordination can make the best use of scarce resources, ensure that mistakes are not repeated, and amplify solutions to achieve maximum impact. On the front end of the research process, having more awareness of planned and underway research projects, much like there is awareness of a diversity of organizational tactics, would minimize repetition or competing projects and findings.

I guess it does come back to more resources, but I wish that we as a movement had a better understanding before the research begins of what is everybody working on? Because sometimes I do feel as though there are some duplicative efforts. On the programmatic side, we know what different organizations' niches are or where they're really strong in certain areas. But on the research side, I don't always really know until someone emails out on [a listserv], we just released this cool research report, and it's like, oh, that's really neat. We're working on something really similar.

The goal of coordination is not only time and resource efficiency, but also ultimately to move the shared meta-mission of all animal advocacy organizations forward.

And I think we should all be friendly enough for things to go wrong and to share that, and not to be, you know, the academics are quite careful about having a nice veneer of how things go. But I think it's quite reassuring if you're working in a movement to look across and go, oh, they have the same thing as us. Let's not do that. Let's leapfrog [...]. I think that's energy and cost-effective and a more collegial way of working that we should be looking to support each other and share. Rather than having either a bit of snobbery or a bit of [...] we made a mistake, but we'll just keep that to ourselves. I think that's really important.

In general, respondents feel that coordination might start from a shared feeling of being the underdog: *“I think farmed animal movement, because we all recognize that we are the bottom of the totem pole when it comes to the animal world and our advocacy that even though we share donors [...] we're very collaborative.”* However, much like the legitimacy of any individual organization is enhanced by having research and evidence to back up their positions, the legitimacy of the whole movement can be enhanced by a more proactive sharing of resources and information.

I like how more and more groups are kind of using data in general and generating some of those insights. Before it felt like there was a bit of more competitiveness, kind of everyone for themselves protecting data and stuff. So that was a bit limiting. But I feel like, through all kinds of networks and associations, for example, like the Open Wing Alliance, there's much more integration and sharing, which I think is strengthening the movement.

Knowledge translation with an eye toward consistency among animal advocacy organizations is acknowledged by some organizations as a big step toward coordination. *“The more we can all work together and help each other bring that information together, that's a huge thing, because it's already hard enough trying to talk about these issues, animals or environment [...] there's conflict between us [...] it's tough.”*

One potential role for knowledge translation and curation is to facilitate having shared facts and figures.

I think some things that could be different are if there was more alignment between organizations/information hubs in terms of numbers. There's a lot of strange numbers roaming around [...]. It isn't actually that big of a world really in terms of resources and organizations, and so it could be doable to get people kind of on the same page seemingly.

Curation Of Knowledge Communities And Resources

The opportunities for collaboration between researchers and advocacy organizations, and coordination among organizations, are two steps in the research and knowledge translation process that are situated in a broader opportunity for ongoing and expanded curation of both knowledge communities and the data, evidence, and information they produce. A very consistent message from interview respondents is that the role played by a few key organizations (Faunalytics, Sentience Institute, Plant-Based Data, Tiny Beam Fund), is a crucial node in the knowledge translation process. From the perspective of many respondents, Faunalytics sits at an especially important intersection of audiences, because the organization and management of research and knowledge products is intended for educated non-expert audiences as well as for advocacy organizations needing to go deep into the evidence.

I think Faunalytics has done some of this, of just really putting together a hub that's really easy to go through from even a lay user standpoint. Because you know, not everybody within our organization, myself included, has the time or the expertise to really parse through a ton of research. But to really just kind of



provide a hub for somebody to easily go to and say, you know, here is where what research is already available in this space [is very helpful].

The clearinghouse function of organizations like Faunalytics is much appreciated and frequently used by almost all of the organizations interviewed for this project. *“I’m kind of stunned at how much value there is in a coordinator role in terms of just sharing best practices and research out there.”* Especially for small and medium-sized organizations that don’t have the resources or mission to have full-time research staff or collaborators, resource libraries and translated resources can function as a bit of an adjunct team member.

Participants’ suggestions for how to improve and build upon that central role reflect the goals of coordination within the movement, and a desire for topline, agreed-upon numbers: *“We would use [resource libraries] more if there were an easier way to access it in the sense of, Hey, we’re doing a thing on dairy [...] what are the real numbers here?”* Another suggestion to address the challenges of the volume, complexity, and ambiguity of ‘raw’ research outputs is for organizations like Faunalytics to develop some type of rubric or rating system to quickly categorize key characteristics of research—a cheat sheet for vetting legitimacy or relevance.

It takes time to really sift through, you know, maybe there’s some topics where it’s very clear what is disinformation, but maybe [in] other cases it is complex and to try to sift through that takes time and expertise. And is there a way that organizations like Faunalytics could vet or greenlight [the source or the framing of research products].

Conclusions

Animal Advocacy Organizations Use Research and Evidence in Several Ways

Research and evidence are used to build legitimacy both internally and externally for the decisions, actions, and messages made by animal advocacy organizations. External legitimacy comes from using peer-reviewed and other rigorous research, and is a top priority for organizations whose tactics focus on institutional change in the public and private sectors. Campaigns and communications with the general public use data points alongside storytelling to support the identification of problems and description of solutions. Data are used strategically by organizations to catalyze action, especially on emerging or timely topics and contexts. Knowledge translation processes and formats are most effective when they reflect these varied purposes and applications of research and evidence.

The research and knowledge translation process can also help build partnerships among animal advocacy organizations, when questions, projects, and findings are coordinated or at least well communicated. Sharing research findings through the knowledge translation process can also build alliances with other social movements, including those focused on climate change, food system transformation, and human health. Collaborative relationships can also increase the efficient use of funding and human resources by ensuring that research projects are not duplicated if a settled evidence base already exists.

More Evidence Is Needed on Effective Tactics and Emerging Production Systems

The general consensus among interview respondents is that there is ample evidence related to animal wellbeing, animal sentience, and the negative impacts of industrial food and animal entertainment systems. The major and fundamental research gap identified by many people working across different types of organizations is related to the efficacy of different types of tactics. More evidence is needed on how to induce and sustain individual behavior change, the long-term impact of certain tactics like disruptive actions, and the keys to successful social movements. Many of these research topics require more engagement from and investment by social and behavioral science researchers, and also need longer time horizons than other types of research. Funders can support investments in research on tactics that are specific to animal welfare and wellbeing, and knowledge translation organizations and activities can put time into summarizing social and behavioral science evidence from other topics or sectors that could be relevant to animal advocacy organizations.

There are also evidence gaps for animal species and production systems that are not well-represented in the Global North. More research is needed focused on hotspots for animal production in the Global South, including South and Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Many species in these systems are not well-known in the Global North and the evidence base for even a basic understanding of their wellbeing is lacking. Research is also needed about consumer preferences and behaviors in emerging markets, especially in middle-income countries where rising incomes could lead to more consumption of animal products but also more willingness to consider animal welfare and wellbeing, as compared to lower income contexts that lack the resources to make different decisions about the use of animals.

Investments in Collaboration and Knowledge Translation Can Enhance the Impact of Research for Animals

Several key bottlenecks exist in the knowledge translation process from research to application. We need to invest in relationship building among animal advocacy organizations and researchers to ensure that research is relevant for animal advocates. Collaborative relationships could help identify gaps in the evidence base, specific research questions or topics of highest priority, and appropriate translation pathways to ensure that interpretation of findings are able to be used. For instance, successful collaborations between academic researchers and advocates require clear communication of movement needs—for example, to ensure that academics are asking the right questions—as outlined in our [blog](#).

Ongoing researcher-advocate relationships can also support more efficient discovery and dissemination of new information, rather than individual organizations having to seek out information each time it is needed. Funders need to invest not only in primary research but also in synthesis research (for example, meta-analyses, evidence reviews, and landscape scans) that can highlight connections between animal welfare and wellbeing, and other issue areas like human health and climate. These cross-connections are seen as crucial to broadening campaign and action messages to reach a wider audience and are especially difficult to derive from a single study or disciplinary approach.

Funders also need to invest in knowledge translation activities. Knowledge translation can come from animal advocacy organizations that conduct their own applied research and evaluation activities, but the lack of time and capacity limits this in practice. Organizations should build time into their grant applications and budgets to support translation work when relevant. Knowledge brokers—organizations that focus on summarizing, integrating, and communicating about the existing body of evidence and research—can be the catalyst for building collaborative relationships early in the research process and can support increased coordination throughout the translation process.

Caveats & Limitations

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

The overall survey sample was fairly representative of the original list used as the sample frame in terms of the breakdown of types of organizations and their focal geographies. However, the



original list was not a comprehensive list of animal advocacy organizations, with known gaps for organizations focused in the non-English speaking Global South and very small organizations across the globe, so the results may not be representative of the animal protection movement as a whole.

Although the sample does not perfectly reflect the population of organizations, the over- and underrepresentation of certain strata within categories reflects a few key considerations.

In the size category, small organizations are underrepresented likely because of extreme capacity constraints—most of the emails sent to these organizations never received a response. Although knowledge translation could be very helpful to this size of organization, there might also be resource constraints that limit the utility of engaging with research and evidence on a consistent basis. The underrepresentation of very large organizations reflects an intentional sampling decision because these organizations' capacities and orientations toward research have more visibility and are more internally integrated due to having adequate resources to set, implement, and translate research.

In the geography category, the overrepresentation of groups that work globally or across multiple geographies was intentional to gain insight into needs of organizations working in the global south. The underrepresentation of organizations working solely in the Global South reflects a combination of language barriers and generally small size (with similar resource limitations to those for all small organizations).

Finally, the overrepresentation of abolitionist and Effective Altruist groups reflects a purposive sampling approach to compare and contrast the needs and interests of organizations with missions and approaches that are often represented as quite opposed to one another. The majority of animal advocacy organizations do not specifically align their mission with either of these ends of the spectrum, and the majority of the sample also falls somewhere in the middle of the spectrum.

Supplementary Materials

Detailed Method

This section provides additional detail about the methods described in the body of this report.

Ethics Review & Preregistration

JG submitted the research design for human subjects research review by the Western Institutional Review Board (WIRB). All study materials were approved in June 2023 (WIRB Study Number 1355898). The study design and analytical plan were also pre-registered on the [Open Science Framework](#).

Sample Frame

The full population for this study was a list of about 200 animal advocacy organizations that has been compiled and maintained by Faunalytics for past research and ongoing communications activities, and provided to JG as a starting point for stratified random sampling. The primary strata used for sampling was size of organization, and additional stratification characteristics included geography of focus and mission/approach of organization. Details about these strata and categories are included in Table 1. Size of organization was only possible to ascertain in a consistent way for organizations based in the United States and Canada using GuideStar profiles. Organizations based elsewhere are characterized when possible based on information available online or that they shared during their interviews. Dominant approach or orientation was used to characterize organizations with a very specific type of approach—abolitionist on one end of the spectrum and Effective Altruism on the other end.

The study goal was to conduct a minimum of 20 interviews to achieve 10% of the full population and a goal of 30 interviews for 15% coverage. In qualitative research, saturation often occurs at 10-12 interviews in a focused population. However, given that the primary sampling frame was organization size, with three strata—small, medium, large—the study goal was 10 respondents in each stratum. The decision was made to not focus systematically on very large organizations, due to the fact these organizations' capacities and orientations toward research have more visibility and are more internally integrated due to having adequate resources to set, implement, and translate research. Within each size stratum, the sampling approach sought to include organizations from each mission type and each geographic focus.

Sampling was initially random within each size stratum, and as recruitment continued, sampling became purposive to seek representation in each secondary category (geography and mission) across each size stratum.

Data Collection

Data was collected through virtual interviews with individuals representing organizations. A recruitment email was drafted and reviewed by the WIRB, and was used as initial outreach to

one or a few contacts at each selected organization. For medium and large organizations, the contact was generally in a senior leadership position focused on research, strategy, or engagement. For small organizations, the contact was generally the founder or executive director. Contact names and information were found on organization websites, and whenever possible, a personalized email using the approved template was sent. Some organizations, especially small organizations and those with an abolitionist approach, did not have individual staff names or contact available on their websites, and if selected, the initial email text was sent through general inquiry webforms or to the general information email address. In total, 40 emails were sent, which generated 20 interviews, for a 50% response rate and a sample size of roughly 10% of the total population of organizations.

Interviews took place between July and August 2023. They were conducted virtually using Zoom and generally lasted 30-45 minutes. Respondents were asked to provide verbal consent to participate in the study and were asked if they were willing to have the interview recorded. Most interviews were recorded and the audio files were transcribed using a secure third-party platform (Rev.com). If a respondent was not comfortable being recorded, detailed notes of the interview were taken. All data collection, management, and reporting activities were designed to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of individuals and the organizations they represent, and the consent form made it clear to respondents that no one outside of the JG research team would have access to any raw or identifiable information.

Respondent Characteristics

In total, interviews were conducted with individuals representing 20 organizations. A summary of sample characteristics, subdivided by sample strata, is presented in Table 2. A full characterization of each organization included in the sample is presented in Table 3 in the Appendix.

Table 2. Interview Sample Characteristics Summary

Size	Total by size	Geography			Mission		
		Global north	Global south	Both	EA	Abolitionist	Other
<i>Small</i>	8	4	1	3	2	2	4
<i>Medium</i>	6	2	3	1	2	1	3
<i>Large</i>	5	3		2	1		4
<i>Very large</i>	1			1			1

Data Analysis

Interview transcriptions and notes were analyzed using NVivo qualitative data analysis software and an iterative approach that included both deductive and inductive coding. The deductive coding scheme was developed during the research design process and built on the knowledge translation literature and the specific research objectives and questions that guide the study. This initial coding scheme was pre-registered with OSF. After interviews were complete and coding began, an additional round of inductive coding schema development was undertaken by the research team. Finally, during thematic coding and further interpretation codes and themes were further organized and linked together in a final round of abductive coding, which organized and integrated existing concepts and frameworks from knowledge translation with the key themes that emerged from interviews.

All thematic coding was done with an eye toward identifying similarities and differences across organizational types—size, geographic focus, and mission—as framed in the research questions. However, one key finding that was explored and elaborated upon throughout the results section was the convergence of themes and reflections across organizational types. Because of the lack of clear and consistent contrast in key themes and implications, the quotes presented in the results section are not identified based on organizational characteristics unless the sentiment or theme being expressed was specific to a certain type of organization.

Appendix A: Study Sample Details

Table 3. Full characteristics of each organization included in the sample

	Size				Geography			Mission		
	S	M	L	VL	North	South	Both	EA	Abol	Other
1	X					X				X
2	X				X				X	
3	X				X				X	
4			X		X					X
5		X					X		X	
6		X			X					X
7			X		X			X		
8		X					X			X
9		X				X		X		
10			X				X			X
11	X						X	X		
12		X			X					X
13				X			X			X
14	X				X					X
15		X					X	X		
16	X				X					X
17			X		X					X
18			X				X			X
19	X						X	X		
20	X						X			X
TOTAL	8	6	5	1	9	2	9	5	3	12
Sampl e	40%	30%	25%	5%	45%	10%	45%	25%	15%	60%
Pop	52%	13%	20%	15%	57%	19%	24%	8%	5%	87%

Appendix B: Examples Of Research Use

This section provides a few extended quotes that are examples of how animal advocacy organizations are using research and data and engaging in the knowledge translation process.

Research Results That Changed Campaigns

There have been other times where we've decided not to continue some work because, so I'll give you another example. We used to, until very recently, focus on trying to get plant-based menu items at fast food chains. But then we got some more research back and our research team was reviewing some consumer information and it's actually not decreasing the amount of meat, dairy and eggs animal products that are being ordered and actually might be increasing that amount because it's really just there's this spike of folks order that because of the novelty, but then it just phases off. But it could also be

that folks go with friends and then most of the friends order the meat option and they're the only one ordering the plant-based option. So we've pivoted from that. We're not focused on that anymore. And thus as a result of research and information.

Research On Tactics

You know, there's so much evidence from past movements of how much people hated the protestors. Ah, you know, like there's just like scathing studies from how much people were like, the lunch counter sit-ins are making Black people look bad. This is not advancing the cause. So there's all this documentation of how much people hated the protestors. And the thing I get annoyed with is, in the animal rights movement we're like, yeah, people hate protestors. So people saw the protests and they were mad and then we were like, don't do the protests. And I'm like, oh, you don't understand. Unless we think that all the protests in the past for the civil rights movement were also net negative, and maybe there's an argument out there that they should have not done any of those protests, sure. But there's so much research from the past that shows how much the suffragettes were just made fun of in the newspaper. So I don't know what the answer is, because I think it's true. People see protestors, people do not like protestors. That's very evidence based. So what do you do with that information, I guess is the, the harder question. I would love to see—I don't even know how you would do this—but studies where there is disruptive, maybe more extreme or radical protests going on in an area where there's also more moderate groups. And if those moderate groups are then able to achieve more wins.

Just one example: there was a study that showed that omnivores are more receptive to messages when they come from omnivores, not from vegans. Just like classic in-group, you know? So I often tell certain invested parties, that's why I don't wanna publicly identify as vegan, and I actually want to. I'm not vegan because I want to be able to empathize and for omnivores to perceive me as being exactly that. But some people don't like that because they don't want me to not live up to the ideal. I can show that research, but it doesn't change their mind. They have another framework in which they're operating.

Knowledge Translation To Other Professionals

Basically if someone is struggling with an eating disorder and they are vegan for whatever reason, most treatment centers will not accept them really because they say you're restricting. The point of coming to this treatment center is to stop yourself from restricting. For some women that may be true. But that's not for all people. You can be an ethical vegan, you can be, there are a million reasons you can be vegan other than using it as a weight loss tool or as a form of restriction [...]. That is somewhere where there was a hundred percent a gap in that research [...] and it's difficult to study because there's so much nuance in a topic like that [...]. In this situation, we're doing this more for

clinicians and for the healthcare space. So we plan on, once it's published in a peer-reviewed journal we plan on doing media pitches to like Women's Health magazine and places like that and translate research for them? Sure. So that we can inform the public, but right now we're like, we need doctors to see this.

Data For Storytelling

I was tasked with doing kind of a motivational speech, which is kinda like a mobilization pitch, I guess. Most of the narrative there is climate science. So it's very much painting a situation of society, drawing on the latest climate literature, the projections, and the issues that we're facing. Compiling that together in a narrative that is taking the data and sticking in a narrative form. So, you know, that ranges from ocean temperature records to heat records being broken and, projections of food insecurity and mass starvation that we're seeing down the line. Looking at historical sociology and what happens when systems get put under stress and drawing on political literature and histories and the emergence of fascism and stuff like that. And then we would kind of pivot into, that opens up the space for transformative change within. You know, it's both an urgency in that you have all of these high officials calling for it as well as ordinary people calling for it. And I guess the narrative is that we're entering into a space where transformative change is possible and necessary. And then we try to draw together a narrative out of all the social movement activity that's happening of all of the different groups and kind of highlight the ecosystem that's pushing towards transformative change.