COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY FOR IMPACT

ON THINK TANKS
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A WORD OF WARNING ON DEMOCRACY

- Is it a driver of think tank formation? (It can help but it is not necessary and not enough)
- Can think tanks strengthen democracy? (They can help but can also legitimate de facto power and undermine democracy)
- Can think tanks exist without democracy? (Sure in fact they can emerge because of its absence)
THE FUNCTIONS OF THINK TANKS

- Provide and advocate for policy solutions
- Identify problems and set the agenda
- Educate the elites (and the public)
- Create and nurture safe spaces and networks for policy deliberation and debate
- Develop the capacity of future cadres of policy makers
- Legitimise power
- Support political parties, interest groups, etc.
CHALLENGE

There is little demand for our research, there are other things on the agenda, and we find it hard to sustain our work on it after the project comes to an end.
We have few chances to influence government policy, decision-making is chaotic and confusing, but there is always...
Our political debate is poor and weak, our parties have no programmatic capacity, campaign promises never become policy, etc.
We are in opposition, disorganised, facing an increasingly authoritarian state, etc.
Post-shock, sudden and unexpected change, new threats have emerged, key institutions have collapsed and we are not sure what will happen next..
COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY FOR IMPACT - APPROACHES

- Orchestra
- Policy window
- Electoral cycles
- Building the opposition
- Make sense of it all
There is little demand for our research, there are other things on the agenda, and we find it hard to sustain our work on it after project comes to an end.
Get the public to sing-along to maximise chances of “being there” when the window of opportunity opens by taking advantage of all possible communication channels.
End of Project
We have few chances to influence government policy, decision-making is chaotic and confusing, but there is always...
A SURGICAL STRIKE

Become a reference, a focal point, and a trusted source of evidence and opinion by focusing your research and communication efforts around a well established event: the budget.
The British umpire: how the IFS became the most influential voice in the economic debate

When the media sizes up tomorrow’s budget, one verdict will matter more than all the others. What’s the secret behind the Institute for Fiscal Studies’ extraordinary power?
Our political debate is poor and weak, our parties have no programmatic capacity, campaign promises never become policy, etc.
Pre-empt party manifestos, disseminate across parties, to the media and the public, and position your experts for top jobs in the run up to elections.
Main components:
1. Research
2. Training/outreach events
3. Broad dissemination/communication
4. Debates

For more info: https://onthinktanks.org/series/think-tanks-and-elections/
ARGENTINA DEBATE

Una iniciativa que promueve la cultura del diálogo para institucionalizar el debate presidencial en torno a una agenda del desarrollo.

100 políticas para potenciar el desarrollo
We are in opposition, disorganised, facing an increasingly authoritarian state, etc.
THE CHILEAN CASE

Develop and popularise new narratives, build consensus, convene and support new networks, prepare future decision-makers, etc.
THINKING POLITICS

Intellectuals and Democracy in Chile, 1973-1988

JEFFREY M. PURYEAR
“the most significant contribution was psychological, not intellectual”

Jeffrey Puryear
Post-shock, sudden and unexpected change, new threats have emerged, key institutions have collapsed and we are not sure what will happen next.
MAKE SENSE OF WHAT HAPPENED

Re-focus your research agenda to attempt to explain what happened, how have things changed (society, the economy, politics), etc.
WHAT IS YOUR CONTRIBUTION?

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