Advocacy Evaluation Update

An Innovation Network Publication

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We define ***advocacy*** *as "a wide range of activities conducted to* ***influence decision makers*** *at various levels." This means not only traditional advocacy work like litigation, lobbying, and public education, but also capacity building, network formation, relationship building, communication, and leadership development. –Innovation Network*

Welcome!

We're pleased to present the inaugural issue of ***Advocacy Evaluation Update***!

The Update is the latest offering in Innovation Network's clearinghouse of advocacy evaluation information and resources.

We thank The Atlantic Philanthropies and the Annie E. Casey Foundation for their support of our efforts and for funding the newsletter.

- Lily Zandniapour, PhD
Interim Executive Director
Innovation Network, Inc.

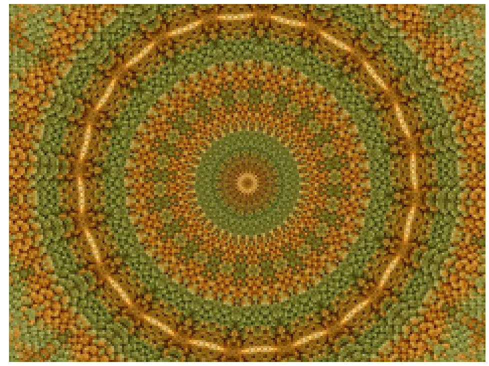
Those of us interested in evaluation of advocacy are trying desperately to keep up with the constant flow of new information and with other developments. The Update is here to help by distributing your information on the subject to the people who can use it and by helping you learn what others are doing in this exciting new field.

This is your newsletter! Whether you are a service provider, an evaluator, or a funder, if you have new findings, reports, tools, models, meetings, challenges, or opinions to share with the rest of the advocacy evaluation community, let us know! We look forward to hearing from you.

- Susan Hoechstetter
Editor and Chief Writer
Advocacy Evaluation Update
and Foundation Advocacy
Director, Alliance for Justice

What's New
(fresh findings / recent resources / current conversations)

A Common Thread: New Model and Guidelines Developed



Seattle, May 1, 2007: Almost 50 foundations and evaluators met to build consensus and knowledge around advocacy evaluation. Evaluating Advocacy Grantmaking, an Advanced Practice Institute session at the Council on Foundations Annual Conference, highlighted current efforts and proposed a new logic model for the field.

Barbara Masters and Astrid Hendricks of The California Endowment, Jackie Kaye of The Atlantic Philanthropies, and Tom Kelly of the Annie E. Casey Foundation spearheaded the event as part of their joint efforts to build the field of advocacy and policy change evaluation. Julia Coffman of Harvard Family Research Project coordinated the Institute.

After describing existing models for advocacy evaluation, session facilitators introduced a new, draft "composite logic model." The model, which is currently under development, is intended to serve as a common starting point for policy evaluation in the nonprofit sector. It aims to provide a comprehensive menu of advocacy-related inputs, activities, outcomes, and impacts.

The model is now being revised based on participant feedback. Session participants also reviewed a draft list of guidelines for clear and constructive communications between grantors and grantees. Once refined, the guidelines and composite logic model will be useful for advocates, funders, and evaluators seeking to understand appropriate measures and outcomes for this kind of work. *Advocacy Evaluation Update* will issue an e-mail when these materials become available for public consumption.

For more information on the composite logic model or the guidelines, contact Julia Coffman, the Institute coordinator, at jcoffman@evaluationexchange.org.

The Evaluation Exchange: Key Advocacy Evaluation Models and Thinking

The Spring 2007 issue of *The Evaluation Exchange*, a Harvard Family Research Project publication, is devoted entirely to advocacy and policy change. According to the publication's managing editor, Julia Coffman, "While advocacy evaluation was previously considered 'too hard to measure,' enterprising evaluators, nonprofits, and funders are now tackling the advocacy evaluation challenge and are sharing their ideas and innovations."

Among other excellent pieces by funders and evaluators, the newsletter includes a compelling perspective from an advocate's viewpoint (an interview with Kay Monaco, former Executive Director of New Mexico Voices for Children).

This issue of *The Evaluation Exchange*, is also posted in Innovation Network's Advocacy Evaluation Resource Center.

Listserv for International Advocacy Evaluation

InterAction, an alliance of more than 160 US-based nongovernmental organizations that do international development and humanitarian work, has set up a listserv to share ideas and experiences related to policy advocacy monitoring and evaluation.

The idea for the listserv arose out of a breakout discussion at the March 2007 InterAction Forum workshop, *What Does It Take to Assess International NGO Impact?*

To join the listserv, visit the InterAction International Advocacy Yahoo Groups page at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IAAdvocacyEvaluation/.

Two-Part Guide on Advocacy Evaluation

Organizational Research Services ("ORS") has developed *A Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy* for the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Guide is a tool for helping the Foundation effectively measure and evaluate the impact of their advocacy grantmaking.

The two-part guide provides an overview of the context for measuring advocacy and identifies outcome categories and addresses evaluation design. The publication can be useful to other grantmakers, as well as nonprofit organizations, coalitions, and evaluators, according to its authors.

ORS has also collected examples of measurement tools for advocacy and policy work, presented in a *Handbook of Data Collection Tools: Companion to a Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy*.

Resources*: Candidate Outcome Indicators and Evaluating Public Policy Grantmaking*

Resource #1:
Candidate Outcome Indicators: Advocacy Program, a joint project between The Urban Institute and The Center for What Works, provides a framework for tracking nonprofit performance. It suggests sample outcomes and outcome indicators to assist nonprofit organizations in developing outcome monitoring processes or improving their existing systems. Visit Innovation Network's Advocacy Evaluation Resource Center to learn more about this publication.

Resource #2:
A new book from Fieldstone Alliance, *Power in Policy: A Funder's Guide to Advocacy and Civic Participation* edited by David Aarons, includes a chapter by John Sherman and Gayle Peterson on policy evaluation for grantmakers.

Topics addressed in the chapter include: "Why Evaluate?, How Evaluation Works, Considerations" and "Cautions Distinct to Evaluation of Public Policy Related Projects, Evaluation Tools," and "Approaches, What to Consider When Hiring an Evaluator."

Evaluation Stories
(case studies / candid interviews / lessons learned)

Jagabandhu Acharya: The Evolution of Oxfam's Advocacy Framework

While advocacy evaluation has only recently become a focus of the nonprofit sector in the U.S., internationally-focused nonprofit organizations have been developing methods for evaluating advocacy for years. Oxfam America is an international relief and development agency that both funds other organizations and implements programs, and is an affiliate of the confederation Oxfam International. It is considered a thought leader in advocacy evaluation among non-governmental organizations. Jagabandhu Acharya is Director of Evaluation in Oxfam America's Department of Learning, Evaluation, and Accountability, which has responsibility for ensuring that Oxfam America's work and that of its grantees is evaluated.

Dr. Acharya spoke with Innovation Network about recent changes in Oxfam America's approach to advocacy.
Skip to our summary of the main ideas in this interview.

Innovation Network: Please tell us about your advocacy evaluation framework at Oxfam America.

Dr. Jagabandhu Acharya: At Oxfam America, we have had a paradigm shift in how we view and design our program work and have developed a new strategy framework which recognizes that our work is often done in partnership with other organizations at multiple levels, and that our goals and programs are often long-term. Oxfam works with its partners as a co-strategist, not only as a grant-giver. We define a program by the impact we want to produce. We require that strategies interlink inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the various interventions planned. With our new framework, we now look at evaluation of advocacy as a continuous process that combines learning with accountability.

We have begun to differentiate between our two types of advocacy. With the first, we target institutional structures, policies and practices related to global poverty, inequality and injustice. We also support the creation of a policy environment that may not have an immediate impact on the lives of the poor, but will provide hooks for partner organizations and others to translate into beneficial policy changes and, ultimately, positive changes in living conditions and in power relations among people. This type of advocacy is often used in the global campaigns. The second type of advocacy forms a part of our regional and national programs. Here, we are looking for changes in policies and practices of governments, public institutions, and corporate business at national, regional, and/or even global levels.

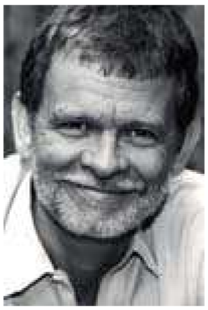
> **Our evaluation efforts made us realize that changing the law does not always translate into [changing the] practice.**

While advocacy in developing countries is mostly carried out in partnerships with local nongovernmental organizations, that in northern countries often involves direct advocacy campaigning by Oxfam. We are co-strategists with our partners so that we are able to strategically influence the change process as we go along.

Continued on Page 8

Any significant public **policy achievement** *has*
a **number of players** *who combine to make it effective.*
It's very, very rare that one organization
or one individual or one funder
can or should claim credit. *-Gara LaMarche*

Gara LaMarche: Evaluation of Immigration Reform Advocacy



Gara LaMarche was interviewed in Foundation Advocacy Bulletin*, (Alliance for Justice, March 2007). Mr. LaMarche gave the interview three weeks before becoming President and Chief Executive Officer* of *The Atlantic Philanthropies. He was formerly Vice President and Director for US Programs at the Open Society Institute. Following is an excerpt from the interview.*

In the late '90s we [Open Society Institute, or OSI] had the Emma Lazarus Fund, which we set up after Congress cut off benefits for legal immigrants in 1996. [OSI Chairman] George Soros felt Congress' action was unjust and wrong so he set up the $15 million Lazarus Fund to do something about it. A lot of that Fund went to providing services for immigrants so that they could be assisted with naturalization and legal assistance.

A significant amount of the funding also went into advocacy to support human rights coalitions around the United States and to support legal and policy advocacy organizations in key parts of the country. The Fund supported the documentation of stories of the hardships that were wrought by the bill on legal immigrants who were denied the protection of the social safety net and the advocacy to bring those stories to the attention of policy-makers, ultimately to Congress. That resulted in a restoration of most of the $16 billion of benefits that had been cut out of the welfare bill.

... We commissioned a report to study the interplay of the services and the policy advocacy. We were able to show a number of places-in key states or with key legislators-that OSI's funding could have made a difference. But I'm tempted to say … that all we had to do was open up the newspaper, see how Congress acted to restore benefits, and make the connection between that and our grantees promoting restoration. This work, though, requires some humility. Any significant public policy achievement has a number of players who combine to make it effective. It's very, very rare that one organization or one individual or one funder can or should claim credit.

Read and download the entire interview with Gara LaMarche.

Working Together: Assessment of Health Collaborative Reveals Complementary Strengths

Readers Please Note:
*If you are involved in **coalition-based advocacy efforts**, please consider taking the survey below.*

A collaborative approach to serving a new ethnic population shows promise, says a recent assessment. Twelve community-based organizations in California's Central Valley have come together in the Hmong Health Project, funded by The California Endowment ("TCE"). The evaluation's baseline assessment suggests that the organizations' complementary strengths will be an asset to the Project's work.

Early this decade, Hmong refugees (formerly encamped at the Wat Tham Krabok temple in Thailand) began to relocate to the United States. Several thousand Hmong are now settled in California. The Hmong Health Project ("HHP") supports community-based organizations in the Central Valley in their efforts to bridge the language and cultural gaps between the Hmong and local health care providers. TCE offers capacity building and programmatic support to the twelve participating organizations, many of which are direct service organizations with limited advocacy experience.

The HHP evaluation assesses the advocacy efforts of the collaborative. Conducted by Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) on behalf of TCE, the evaluation focuses on measuring changes in advocacy capacity of individual organizations as they engage in joint advocacy efforts. SPR's recent baseline assessment found a range of complementary skills, experience, and expertise across the 12 participating organizations. Evaluators suggested that this implies great potential for learning between organizations as the project progresses. SPR also discussed how each organization's strengths can contribute to the overall capacity of the collaborative.

For their baseline measurements, SPR adapted the Alliance for Justice's Capacity Assessment Tool from "Build Your Advocacy Grantmaking: Advocacy Evaluation Tool/Advocacy Capacity Assessment Tool." The HHP evaluation altered the Capacity Assessment Tool's indicators to account for varying levels of organizational readiness to take on systems change work, experience with advocacy work, and cultural and community contexts.

SPR's two-year evaluation of the HHP informs TCE's ongoing policy advocacy work and strategy.

For more information about the results and implications of the baseline assessment from this evaluation, contact The California Endowment for a copy of "Baseline Assessment of a Hmong Health Project Advocacy Capacity" by Traci Endo Inouye, 2007.

Looking Ahead
(upcoming events / dates to save / work in progress)

July 19— "Advocacy Evaluation...Lessons for the Field"
This session, presented by Innovation Network, focuses on the challenges involved in evaluating advocacy and their implications for evaluators, advocates and funders, and will offer practical steps for planning and implementing advocacy evaluations. **Details:** Alliance for Nonprofit Management 2007 Conference, "Pathways to Nonprofit Success" in Atlanta, Georgia.

July 20— "Evaluation to Measure Social Change: Best Practices for Technical Assistance Providers"
Innovation Network will be training the trainers in this session which offers practical ideas and tips for technical assistance providers who conduct workshops and training programs on evaluation. **Details:** Alliance for Nonprofit Management 2007 Conference, "Pathways to Nonprofit Success" in Atlanta, Georgia.

November 7-10— Advocacy Evaluation Events at Annual AEA Conference
Because American Evaluation Association (AEA) recently launched a new Advocacy and Policy Change Topical Interest Group (TIG), AEA will be putting a greater focus on advocacy evaluation at their conferences. The new TIG is building a community of practice to help interested evaluators learn about and contribute to new developments in the field.

Details: The TIG will debut at this year's AEA conference in Baltimore, "Evaluation 2007: Evaluation and Learning", sponsoring a series of panels, demonstrations, and other presentations on evaluating advocacy and policy change. AEA members can join the new TIG by going to the AEA website, signing in with their username and password, and then updating their profile. Anyone who is not an AEA member but would still like to hear about TIG-related news should contact a member of the Advocacy and Policy Change TIG by visiting the TIG section of AEA's website.

November 8— Alliance for Justice Web Workshop
Advocacy Capacity Assessment and Evaluation. The one-hour web workshop describes the challenges to evaluating advocacy and tools for both assessing advocacy capacity and evaluating advocacy work. **Details:** Baltimore, MD. For more information, visit AFJ's calendar.

Questions of Measurement
(Your experiences with Advocacy Evaluation)

This is your newsletter, and we want to learn from you. Each Update will offer at least one short survey about your practices, your thinking, or other aspects of your work. We'll share what we learn from the results.

Getting to Know You: The more we know about you, the better we can tailor the Update's content to your interests. This quick survey asks about your work and where you do it.
7 questions / 2 minutes / Take the survey in Zoomerang:
http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB226MXYK395D

Advocacy Work, Together: Many advocacy efforts involve coalitions of organizations. If you're interested in coalition-based advocacy, we're interested in your views on advocacy evaluation.
2-9 questions / 1-13 minutes / Take the survey in Zoomerang:
http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB226MU5GYVYC

Jagabandhu Acharya: The Evolution of Oxfam's Evaluation Framework [continued]

InnoNet: How do you look at the impact of policy work?

Acharya: In evaluating advocacy campaigns, we look at policy outcomes, not necessarily how the policy changes eventually impact people's lives since there are many more levels to evaluate over time before the policy outcomes could get translated into the intended concrete impact on people's lives. We may not always reach the final destination of changing the policy, but we move towards it by influencing attitudes, beliefs, and even the very nature of the debates. Intermediate objectives such as these, therefore, are important because they have long-term strategic implications. We are also aware that with most advocacy, as the campaign gathers tempo, some of the intermediate outcomes will be different from what was originally projected.

Given the fast pace of advocacy campaigns, our primary evaluation focus is on obtaining credible, quick feedback in short intervals

And, advocacy campaigns do not always directly link with a program impact. In Mozambique, for example, we successfully worked to get the government to include women's rights into the country's legal framework. Our evaluation of that effort, by the way, made us realize that changing the law does not always translate into practice. Attitudes and practices of the police, judiciary and others may also have to be changed. Now we are working with partners to ensure that the law is implemented so that people may extract its full benefit. As a result of our ongoing evaluations, advocacy to implement the law is another level of work that we are doing. This work is particularly difficult in many developing countries, and necessitates a different approach to advocacy than is needed in the United States.

InnoNet: Is advocacy integrated into your program work?

Acharya: In the long-run yes, but in the short run it depends. Sometimes there are stand-alone advocacy campaigns. At other times, advocacy can be just one part of a regional/national program, and, in that case, must be strategically linked to overall program goals. For example, our coffee program interventions range from international campaigns to get a fair price for the coffee farmers to strengthening the farmers productivity and market position through the promotion of coffee farmers' cooperatives. One or our recent campaigns is pitched at yet another level. An international company is using traditional Ethiopian brand names on their coffee products there to make them appealing to the people. The Ethiopian government has filed for patent rights to those brand names and the company is opposing the government's action. We are part of an advocacy effort to get the company to withdraw their opposition to Ethiopia having the patent rights, in support of the development of native coffee production. The advocacy portion of this program will be evaluated within the overall context of our achievements in changing the economic conditions and the power relations of the coffee farmers.

InnoNet: Tell us more about your new evaluation framework.

Acharya: Given the fast pace of advocacy campaigns, our primary evaluation focus is on obtaining credible, quick feedback in short intervals so that we can improve our work as we go along. We view advocacy evaluation as a continual learning feedback loop. We embed a researcher on the advocacy campaign team who documents the work and scans the outside environment. The researcher placed on the team for evaluation purposes is not managed by the campaign team, but has access to all of the program information.

The researcher documents the decision-making process, the adequacy of evidence behind team assumptions, alternative scenarios plans, information gathered from scanning the external environment, related research, and the trends and intermediate outcomes being generated.

The researcher would critically analyze the data, and give feedback to the program team at frequent intervals. As a result, the campaign team can improve their work, modify plans and even stop activities that may not be useful. There is no reason to continue work that has negative effects on the campaign by allowing a mistake to continue on. We are accountable to learn from our problems as much as from successes, and we learn best when learning can be internalized and applied in the situation.

The fact is that we don't evaluate everything. We always need to work out what needs to be researched and evaluated in a given situation, and what does not.

In the case of regional programs implemented mostly by local partners, however, the approach is slightly different. Here we tie up with a local research institute to carry out required research in a relatively independent way, and there is a multi-stakeholder body that meets every six months to identify topics for research, help integrate the learning into the program, and ensure accountability to stakeholders.

InnoNet: Would your advocacy evaluation framework work for small foundations or grantees?

Acharya: Small organizations can't do all of it themselves. But they can tie up with other organizations, as for example, we did with our support in countries affected by the tsunami of December [2005] , to assess the work of the entire coalition. That also allowed us to build on the credibility of our partners. With coalitions engaged in advocacy, it is more workable to evaluate outcomes with partner organizations. And the fact is that we don't evaluate everything. We always need to work out what needs to be researched and evaluated in a given situation, and what does not.

InnoNet: Have you evaluated your work in the Gulf Coast after the Katrina/Rita hurricane season?

Acharya: We have been in the Gulf Coast for one and half years and are in the process of converting our initial investments to programs. The right to housing is our major thrust.

Our post-hurricane work in the Gulf Coast has a very strong advocacy component and a strong research component. However, our evaluation scan is not only for our direct interventions or our funding support because we are working with a number of partners, some of whom are not our grantees. We are therefore evaluating the work of the whole coalition and we are looking at the larger picture of what value our presence brings. Regarding our value added there, the questions we are asking are about how much we influence other players, how the environment is changing, and how we modify our interventions.

Small organizations can't do all of it themselves. But they can tie up with other organizations to assess the work of the entire coalition.

Currently we are conducting anecdotal studies, but are preparing for longer-term work gathering evidence. We will then integrate the research findings properly and systematically and adapt our work accordingly.

Through this learning we are making ourselves accountable. And, we are in it for the long haul.

InnoNet: When will your new advocacy evaluation methodology be publicly available, and who is putting it together?

Acharya: We plan to come out with the framework publicly later this year. We also plan to have an open forum on policy advocacy evaluation methods so that different organizations, can come, share, and learn from each other. Our six-person team -half are professional evaluators and the rest have complementary experience-has developed and continues to develop our methodology with the help of experience, continuous research by independent research groups linked to us, and through talking with multiple stakeholders in the development sector, the public, and others.

***InnoNet Summary*:**
Dr. Acharya's description of Oxfam's changing framework for evaluating advocacy emphasizes the following major concepts:

- Differentiating between two types of advocacy: (1) campaigns for influencing policy and institutions at the global level that create an environment that others can use to create change, and (2) campaigns that are part of a geographically focused (national/regional) program geared towards a rights-based impact on people.
- Evaluating the entire work of a coalition working on a specific project, rather than one or more organizations within the coalition.
- Focus on learning - by providing continuous and timely evaluation feedback to mark trends and to modify interventions.
- Setting intermediate outcomes while making long term program commitments.
- Including independent researchers on program teams to provide evaluation feedback.

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p. 5, Portrait of Gara LaMarche