2010 EEN Forum Notes

Session Name: Evaluating Coalition and Advocacy Capacity

Session Date/Time: 6/7/2010, 1:15 PM session

Notetaker: Matt Curtis

Main Themes:

- How is Advocacy Evaluation different from other types?
- How can we make Advocacy more effective through Evaluation?
- Why should people invest in Evaluation?
- How do you assess advocacy capacity?
- How do you build capacity?

Detailed Notes:

Rhonda Shlangen

What's different about evaluating advocacy?

- Timeframe of change – planning, monitoring and evaluating to test short-term strategies, track progress, and measure long-term results

Policy change is a long-term process that doesn't lend itself to long-term planning

- Actions may be organized within discrete windows of opportunities or artificial constructs like grant cycles

- Long-term change is typically policy change; short-term/interim changes are often left out of planning, accountability

- Can occur w/in discrete windows of opportunity, e.g. state leg. session, COP or indeterminate process (e.g. constitutional review process in Kenya) with a well-defined unit of measure (e.g. regulatory change); organized as a campaign or longer-term

- Larger – Long-term change typically policy change; short-term/interim more difficult to identify and IME often left out of the equation;

Climate change didn't start and end with Copenhagen and post-COP events; it's clear that those who put all their eggs in COP made a serious miscalculation

Examples of Evaluation used in Advocacy - Constitutional review process in Kenya; Donor expectations: change x law in x years; Data needs: rapidly changing issues require ongoing feedback mechanisms; *Data and analysis*: data points, unless using public polling; grassroots #s rarely distilled to numbers— e.g. % of population; lack of denominators (32 actions in 22 states); 15000 signatures

Nature of Advocacy: Dynamic and fluid vs. planful and deliberate

→   Tension between the dynamics of advocacy /policy change process and evaluation; Difficult to evaluate a moving object

Disconnect between action and effect

- Crowded playing fields

- Flotillas, coalitions, partnerships and networks

External influences – focusing events, competing political agendas (e.g. health care reform and climate change)

Scope: public policy, behavior change, issue framing, communications – effective advocacy strategy incorporates all and has feedback mechanisms; employs cross-cutting strategies

"Logic model": E.g. "opposition tracking" but not incorporated into policy advocacy; lack of intel;

SMART objectives, v. text book…but how real?

External influences: focusing events, competing policy agendas (e.g. health care reform and climate change); Cross-cutting strategies: public policy, communications, grassroots organizing, research, issue framing

Strategies and tools

- Planning, monitoring and evaluation to test short-term strategies, track progress and measure longer-term results
- Redefine success: map connections between what you are doing and change accountable for Connecting action to effect
- Realistic, appropriate accountability: what changes can be reasonably accomplished?
- Focus on contribution, not attribution
- Identify and account for external influences

Tools: new methodologies, "Bellwether" and "secret shopper"
- Measure what matters – e.g. baselines and denominators
- Monitor what matters
- Indicators related to change, evidence of progress rather than outputs
- Theory of change or outcomes map
    o Understanding how change happens; proactive vs. reactive (E.g. role of opposition)

→ Theory of change: expresses relationships between actions and hoped-for results; Kingdon's agenda-setting theory of change, shift from policy change as the ultimate outcome;
- Redefine success: pull lens back and look at short-term, interim outcomes
- Map connections between what you are doing and change accountable for, for example:

I. Campaign emphasis: Framing issue, internal alignment
Redefine and frame: Emphasis but issues with campaign clarity. Conflicting definitions of 'campaign' and ideas about how the campaign would affect change in the 4Ps. Planning and monitoring gaps, limited

leadership and insufficient resources for core campaign activities. Current staff and leadership is a significant strength adding clarity. Evidence base is an evolving strength.

Drivers and paths of influence: Identified but to what extent has a strategy been developed? Strategies becoming more clear under current leadership. Vision widely supported internally. External organizations not formally or systematically engaged to help influence drivers. Exception is the UNAIDS co-sponsors and IATTs. Insufficient support to National Committees and uneven work with field offices.

Mobilization of targeted actors, institutions: Two issues: focus and actors. 1) "partnership" external: took flotilla approach vs. deeper collaboration, took action but not as part of the campaign; Internal "partners" take action but monitoring diffuse. 2) Ps: Emphasis on P1 and P2, with less clarity on P4 and even less focus on P3, Post 2008 campaign is taking more direct and innovative advocacy and more focused programmatic action.

Increased salience public, targeted institutions, mechanisms/processes: Alignment around the 4Ps, children at the center of HIV/AIDS response. Targeted institutions, mechanisms, processes initially broad and unspecified. Current campaign has tightened focus but interim outcomes still need to be clarified.

Targeted changes in institutions and policies: Targeted changes are broad and somewhat unspecified. Limited handle on overall resources allocated by global community for children and AIDS. Resources mobilized for UNICEF but not to the extent anticipated. UNICEF apparently successful at leveraging funds but monitoring is informal.

Impact: Positive trends in P1 and P2 with stars in alignment for possibility for virtual elimination of vertical transmission. P3 and P4 progress on individual indicators but progress toward goals indeterminate.

   Really missing – country-level involvement, action by governments, actors.

II. Is it accurate or still relevant? Holes due to poor TOC or due to campaign action? Worked for agenda-setting stage/aspect of initial theory but new era requires new focus. Arguably, the agenda has been set. Assumptions are on stable, aligned global institutors, purse strings, which holds true to some extent but weakens at the country level. Aid and development effectiveness emphasis has shifted to country level. 2010-2015 campaign focus are also timelined differently. E.g. Virtual elim. Is positioned to spring forward quickly, esp. in places where political will, resources, technology are aligned. Sexual violence goals aren't as clear, but arguably are part of larger social change as well as policy, program.

Example of monitoring and reporting that emphasizes analysis and learning: Copenhagen Climate Change Campaign

Why invest in evaluation?
- Investment vs. impact
- Why did Copenhagen fail?
- Where did we go wrong? Internal vs. external factors
- Strategic strengths and weaknesses
- Positioning vis-à-vis other players

Strategies:
- Evaluation questions and scope
- "Secret Shopper"
- Internal/External informants
- Iterative process to develop findings and recommendations
      Where did we go wrong?
      -One organization
      -Collective strategy
      -External process

Key messages:

   Advocacy evaluation is real, possible and legitimate, but requires some different strategies

Planning, monitoring and evaluation that allows for dynamism but supports evidence-based advocacy is intrinsic to scale-up and replication of good advocacy

Recommended resources:
}Center for Innovation in Evaluation
}http://www.innonet.org/

}Organizational Research Services
}www.organizationalresearch.com
}*Pathways to Change: 6 Theories about how Policy Change Happens* (2009) Sarah Stachowiak, Organizational Research Services

PeiYao Chen – TCC Group
- o (This part of the session is slightly adjusted – no Kate Locke, more focused on Advocacy side=measuring results and assessing capacity for Advocacy)
- TCC – works w/ NGOs and groups using a learning based approach to evaluation
- Capacity – have capacity to carry out activities; not as an afterthought or taking for granted but as part of the process
- TCC – working w/ foundations and nonprofits to understand organizational matters in the nonprofit sector
- Seen an increase in attempts to understand advocacy's capacity
- What makes and advocacy org. effective?
    - o Context/issues for advocacy work
    - o Resource flexibility
    - o Monitoring and measuring progress
High levels of uncertainty

Rapidly changing environments

- o Visibility
- o Funding
- o Intuitive leaders
- o Professionalization of the advocacy field
- o Low need for replication
- o Logic Model: Advocacy Initiatives
- What does capacity tell us?
    - o Clarity on where the org thinks it is going
    - o Relevance of an orgs advocacy objectives
    - o Four core types of capacity:
        - ▪ Leadership
        - ▪ Adaptive
        - ▪ Management
        - ▪ Technical

- What characteristics must they have to achieve their mission?
- Once all of the plans and programs defined this is frequently addressed
- Leadership – motivation, persuasion, board leadership, strategic vision,
- Really about:
    - o Org. of resources for effective and efficient advocacy

- - Non-staff resource management, external relationships management
  - HR
  - Financial management
- Also need knowledge on "how change takes place"
- Chart of leadership and management capacities
- How do you assess advocacy capacity?
  - Determine a framework
  - Collect data
  - Data analysis
  - Integrate into the work
  - 2 tools:
    - Advocacy capacity assessment tool from alliance for justice
    - Advocacy core capacity assessment tool (A-CCT) from TCC group
  - Private model providing complementary A-CCT; organized on the 4 capacities – leadership –adaptive – management – technical
  - How do I build capacity?
    - Determine a framework
    - Do an assessment
    - Determine best approach
    - Assess your efforts
  - Likelihood of Advocacy success
    - Do you have a clearly articulated objective?
    - An "anticipated path to change?"
    - Can you demonstrate adaptive capacity?
    - That you have the skills to make it work?
    - Good short term indicator of success - look and see if you have what it takes to succeed in the whole advocacy process