

Advocacy Evaluation Update

An Innovation Network Publication

Issue # 6 • June 2009



Greetings!

Welcome to the sixth issue of *Advocacy Evaluation Update!*

We're pleased to be your source for advocacy evaluation news and inspiration.

The resources we feature here are also available at the **Point K Learning Center** (www.innonet.org/resources/). Once you're logged in (it's free), just choose "Review this Resource" to add your thoughts.

Do you have more insights or resources from the advocacy evaluation field? Don't keep them to yourself! Email us to share your contributions with *AEU's* nearly 630 subscribers.

- The *AEU* team at
Innovation Network

Email Us:

advocacy [at] innonet [dot] org

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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, organizing, communication, and leadership development.*

–Innovation Network

Quick Links

[Focus Area: Advocacy Evaluation](#)

[Advocacy evaluation resources at the Point K Learning Center \(free login required\)](#)

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What's New

(fresh findings / recent resources / current conversations)

Fresh Resources

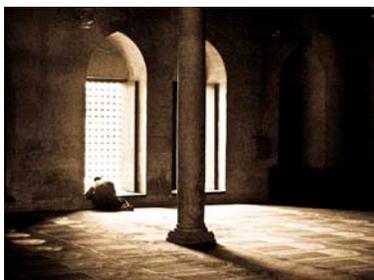
The advocacy evaluation field is rich in original analysis and practical tools. Here is a summary of four recent releases.



- [Pathways for Change: 6 Theories about How Policy Change Happens](#)
Sarah Stachowiak of Organizational Research Services
Theories of change are useful tools for communication, building partnerships, and planning. This brief describes six theories of policy change. It also reviews the assumptions underlying each theory.
- [Ten Considerations for Advocacy Evaluation Planning](#)
Organizational Research Services
"Ten Considerations" offers a crash course in evaluation for advocates. Topics include how to discuss evaluation needs, clarify interim measures, plan data collection, and build evaluation into daily routines.
- [What Makes an Effective Advocacy Organization?](#)
TCC Group
This report offers a model for evaluating the capacity of advocacy organizations. The authors describe key elements of capacity and discuss how they interrelate.
- [Resources for Evaluating Community Organizing \(RECO\)](#)
Alliance for Justice
RECO is AFJ's hand-picked list of nearly five dozen resources on evaluating community organizing. RECO organizes its picks in three categories: theoretical approaches, tools and methodologies, and case studies.

Highlights from Impact Evaluation Conference in Cairo by Julia Coffman

Cairo, Egypt, March 2009: Seven hundred participants from around the world met for the [Perspectives on Impact Evaluation Conference](#). Conference organizers used a broad definition of impact evaluation; the term was not limited to any specific methodology.



A main conference topic was "Impact Evaluation: Approaches and Methods." Experimental or quasi-experimental designs can be impractical or inappropriate for advocacy efforts. More suitable techniques for advocacy were presented, including:

Highlights from Impact Evaluation Conference in Cairo, continued

Contribution Analysis

John Mayne

In advocacy work, it can be impossible to show cause-and-effect between programs and outcomes. In such cases, "Contribution Analysis" is a useful approach. The method focuses on contribution, rather than attribution. It shows whether a credible case can be made that an intervention (or advocacy effort) contributed to certain outcomes (such as policy changes). The six-step process includes familiar theory of change construction, but adds less-conventional steps to test that theory. For more information, see Mayne's 2008 brief, [*Contribution analysis: An approach to exploring cause and effect.*](#)

RealWorld Evaluation

Michael Bamberger, Jim Rugh, and Linda Mabry

Evaluators often work under less-than-ideal conditions. We almost always have limited budgets and timeframes. We often lack baseline data. We can face political pressures during the evaluation process. RealWorld Evaluation offers practical advice for handling such constraints while maintaining methodological rigor. The approach is detailed in a book from [Sage Publications](#). Read free excerpts on the [RealWorld Evaluation website](#).

Most Significant Change Technique

Rick Davies and Jess Dart

This technique is useful for complex efforts, like advocacy, that produce diverse and emergent outcomes. Participants offer stories about the changes an effort has achieved; an evaluator verifies the stories and selects the most significant. The approach produces compelling data and fosters a culture of reflection and learning. See [Clear Horizon's summary](#) or the [comprehensive MSC user guide](#) for more.

Participatory Performance Story Reporting

Jess Dart

Performance stories are short reports about how an effort contributed to its intended outcomes. The technique has two main elements:

- A five-step process for generating the performance story, and
- A five-part structure for reporting it.

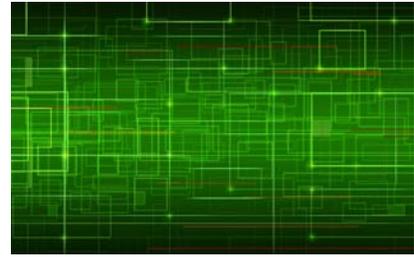
A unique feature of this process is its "outcomes panel." The panel consists of people with relevant scientific, technical, or substantive knowledge. The panel determines whether the stories build a credible case that the effort contributed to its outcomes. Read more about this approach on [Clear Horizon's website](#).

The Perspectives on Impact Evaluation conference was sponsored by the [African Evaluation Association](#) (AfrEA), [International Initiative for Impact Evaluation](#) (3ie), and the [Network of Networks for Impact Evaluation](#) (NONIE).

Advocacy Evaluation Bloggers

Blogs are a great way to get frequent, bite-sized information. We've been reading two blogs that may be of interest to *AEU* subscribers:

- The Exchange (www.gii-exchange.org/blog/) is the blog of the Global Interdependence Initiative at the Aspen Institute. Past posts include [Daring to Evaluate Political Will](#) and [An Advocate's Perspective: Ten Considerations for Effective Advocacy Evaluation](#).
- Rick Davies maintains the resource-rich [Monitoring and Evaluation NEWS](#) at www.mande.co.uk. Posts cover a wide range of topics and event announcements. Advocacy evaluation topics in the past six months have included [Social Network Analysis and the Evaluation of Leadership Networks](#) and [Evaluating international advocacy networks](#).



Are there other blogs that *AEU* readers should know about? Would you read an *AEU* blog, if we set one up? Tell us: [advocacy \[at\] innonet \[dot\] org](mailto:advocacy@innonet.org).

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

National Conference to End Homelessness July 29 to 31, 2009, Washington, DC



The [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#) will hold its annual conference next month. Innovation Network's own [Ehren Reed](#) will be on a panel entitled "Evaluating Your Advocacy and Communications Efforts." Find more information and registration details on the [NAEH conference website](#).

Reminder: Advocacy and Policy Change Journal Issue Summer 2009

The *Foundation Review* is a new peer-reviewed journal for the philanthropic sector. Its third issue, due out this summer, will feature advocacy and policy change. Find out more, and sign up for a free trial issue, at www.foundationreview.org.



AEA Advocacy Evaluation Pre-conference Training Session November 11, 2009, Orlando, FL

We know we talk a lot about the American Evaluation Association's annual conference. That's because it's a hotbed of emerging evaluation thought, tools, and practices. This year, [Organizational Research Services](#) and [Innovation Network](#) will jointly deliver a day-long training session about advocacy evaluation. The session is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, November 11 in Orlando, Florida. Check the [AEA conference website](#) for up-to-date information.



Advocacy Evaluation Update #6 (June 2009)

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Project Staff: Johanna Morariu, Simone Parrish, Andy Stamp, and Lily Zandniapour

Contributing author: Julia Coffman

Produced with support from The Atlantic Philanthropies

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Contact us:
advocacy [at] innonet [dot] org