Advocacy Evaluation Update

An Innovation Network Publication

Greetings!

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

Information and models for evaluating advocacy work have been rapidly expanding in the last few years. Recent American Evaluation Association ("AEA") annual conferences have been an excellent way to share information about those developments. This past November, for example, there were four times as many presenters on advocacy evaluation and twice as many related sessions at the AEA annual conference than at the previous year's conference.

The field of advocacy evaluation continues to be enriched by new knowledge. We hope you find our reports of these developments informative and inspirational.

If you have any insights, comments, or resources to share about advocacy evaluation, don't keep them to yourself! We would love to have additional contributions from our readers. Please contact us:

advocacy [at] innonet [dot] org.

- *Innovation Network*

In This Issue:

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

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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.*
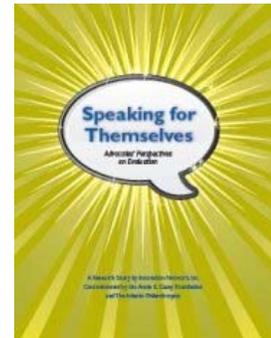*–Innovation Network*

Quick Links

Focus Area: Advocacy Evaluation

Advocacy Evaluation Resources at Point K (free login required)

About the Point K Learning Center

About Innovation Network

Support Point K

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

New Research Study:
Speaking for Themselves: Advocates' Perspectives on Evaluation

Last year, for the first time, those interested in evaluation of advocacy formally had a home at the American Evaluation Association's ("AEA") annual conference. Innovation Network has just released a new publication examining the current state of advocacy strategy and evaluation practice. The report, *Speaking for Themselves: Advocates' Perspectives on Evaluation*, will give you a better understanding of advocates' views on evaluation, the advocacy strategies and capacities they find effective, and the practices used to evaluate advocacy work.

More than 200 nonprofit advocacy staff responded to the survey from which the publication draws its data. The report offers numerous recommendations based on Innovation Network's research for advocates, funders, and evaluators.

One key finding is that only **one in four** responding nonprofit organizations engaged in advocacy has evaluated its work. The remaining 75 percent do not systematically collect information to inform their advocacy strategy. This isn't negligible: even this small sample of 150 non-evaluating organizations represents organizational budgets totaling approximately **$250 million**—money that, without evaluation, may not be being spent strategically.

Download *Speaking for Themselves* free from the Advocacy Evaluation Project page, www.innonet.org/advocacy.

Eventually, the publication will be accessible only through Innovation Network's Point K Learning Center (free registration required) at http://www.innonet.org/resources/. Both the publication and its underlying research were made possible by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and The Atlantic Philanthropies.

New Recommended Resource:
Atlantic Reports: Investing in Change: Why Supporting Advocacy Makes Sense for Foundations

Investing in Change, the first in the "Atlantic Reports" series, focuses on the practice of grantmaking in support of advocacy. The report explains why The Atlantic Philanthropies and other funders are committed to advocacy as a valuable strategy to advance social change. It also highlights the advocacy grantmaking experiences of The Atlantic Philanthropies and other foundations in the U.S. and around the world.

Investing in Change is available at the Point K Learning Center, or directly at The Atlantic Philanthropies' website:
http://atlanticphilanthropies.org/content/download/5238/79869/file/ATLP_advocacy_report.pdf.

Advocacy Evaluation Training: What Is Available?
by Julia Coffman and Innovation Network

Within the advocacy evaluation field, resources are growing faster than awareness. New tools are being developed, but getting know-how into the hands of the advocates, evaluators, and funders who need it is lagging. To date, efforts to catalog available advocacy evaluation resources have been useful, but until now there has been no assessment of a core component of the field's infrastructure: *training*.

Advocacy evaluation training is critical to the field's future because increasing advocacy evaluation's use requires first increasing the number of people and organizations who understand its value and know how to do it.

With support from The California Endowment, Julia Coffman and Innovation Network recently completed a scan of available advocacy evaluation trainings. This article offers selected results of the scan.

Definitions and Scope

The scan focused on trainings in the United States. It included trainings that contain information about both *advocacy* (activities conducted to influence audiences or outcomes in order to advance public policy and social change) and *evaluation* (any aspect of the evaluation process, from planning to implementation to reporting and use of results). The scan defined *training* as in-person or web-based professional development workshops, courses, or seminars that have been offered at least once and could be offered again, or that are in development.

Training audiences could include advocates, evaluators, or funders. The scan *did not* include one- or two-hour presentations about advocacy evaluation, as the focus here was on longer and more applied sessions that build capacity and skills.

Scan Results

The scan identified 14 organizations that provide advocacy evaluation training. (See the attached table.) Analysis of these training opportunities revealed:

- **Training is an area in need of growth.** A number of prominent organizations train in this field, but not enough to meet demand. Also, advocacy evaluation trainers do not advertise or aggressively market their offerings, and knowing where to go for training requires some "insider" knowledge. This scan was designed, in part, to address the need for more knowledge about what is available and which organizations to turn to.

- **Funders and evaluators are underserved.** Most trainings target advocates as their audiences. Funders have fewer options for training, despite an increased focus on measuring their grantees' results; evaluators have even fewer.

- **Front-end evaluation is emphasized more than methods.** Most training curricula and associated tools emphasize evaluation planning. For example, theories of change and

indicator development are popular training elements. This addresses a practical need: advocates tend to be most involved in the evaluation process early on. However, more trainings need to address data collection methods and implementation. This would not only better serve evaluators, it would ensure advocates have the knowledge and skills to follow through on their evaluation plans.

- **Trainings combined with follow-up technical assistance can help ensure capacity is built.** Half-day and even full-day trainings are limited in what they can accomplish. Ongoing coaching and technical assistance attached to trainings are valuable learning mechanisms as they can help ensure participants can apply evaluation approaches and tools once trainings end. Many of the organizations identified have the expertise to provide such follow up.

- **Most trainings are newly developed.** Because the advocacy evaluation field has emerged just recently, most trainings are new and organizations are still testing and refining their curricula and approaches.

You Can Help!

While the scan's goal was to capture as many advocacy evaluation trainings as possible, inevitably some trainings were missed. Do you know of other available advocacy evaluation training? If so, we want to hear from you! Email Innovation Network's Laura Ostenso at lostenso [at] innonet [dot] org. Please include the name of the organization or individual offering the training, and any known contact information. We will continue to update this document as new offerings are identified.

Julia Coffman is a senior consultant with Harvard Family Research Project and an independent evaluation consultant. She also serves on Innovation Network's board of directors. Additional work on the scan was done by Innovation Network Associates Johanna Gladfelter Morariu and Laura Ostenso.

Organizations Providing Tailored[1] Advocacy Evaluation Trainings[2]

Organization (alphabetical)	Evaluation Topics				Audiences			Training Tools and Resources
	Theory of Change/ Logic Model	Outcome Selection	Indicators/ Measures	Design/ Methods	Advocates/ Nonprofits	Funders	Evaluators	
Advocacy Leadership Center Center for Sustainable Communities Montpelier, VT iscvt.org		■	■	■	■	■	■	
Alliance for Justice Washington, DC www.afj.org		■	■		■	■		*Advocacy Evaluation Tool & Advocacy Capacity Assessment Tool* (print and online) www.advocacyevaluation.org
Asibey Consulting New York, NY www.asibey.com	■	■	■	■	■	■		*Continuous Progress* website (designer) www.continuousprogress.org

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[1] Three organizations identified in the scan are not included in the table, because they provide only standardized trainings. They are: Rensselaerville Institute Center for Outcomes, Rensselaerville, NY, www.rinstitute.org; Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest, Washington, DC, www.clpi.org; and Communications Leadership Institute, San Francisco, CA, www.smartcommunications.org.

[2] Information was gathered from key informant interviews. Data were self-reported and not independently verified. The scan did not assess training quality.

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Blueprint Research and Design San Francisco, CA www.blueprintrd.com	■	■	■	■	■	■		*The Challenge of Assessing Policy and Advocacy Activities Part I: Strategies for a Prospective Evaluation Approach* www.blueprintrd.com/text/challenge_assess.pdf *Part II: Moving from Theory to Practice* www.blueprintrd.com/text/06_10_challengeofassessing.pdf
Center for Community Change Washington, DC www.communitychange.org	■		■	■	■			
Continuous Progress Washington, DC www.continuousprogress.org	■	■	■		■	■		Online *Advocacy Progress Planner* planning.continuousprogress.org Continuous Progress website www.continuousprogress.org

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The Headwaters Group Philanthropic Services Saint Paul, MN www.headwatersgroup.com *Note: Does not provide standardized trainings.*	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Innovation Network, Inc. Washington, DC www.innonet.org	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	*Point K* Learning Center: Online evaluation tools, advocacy evaluation resource database www.innonet.org/point k *Speaking for Themselves: Advocates Perspectives on Evaluation* www.innonet.org/advoc acy
Institute for Health Policy Studies San Francisco, CA ihps.medschool.ucsf.edu	■	■	■		■			
Mission Measurement Chicago, IL www.missionmeasurement.c om *Note: Does not provide standardized trainings.*	■	■	■	■	■	■		

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Mosaica: The Center for Nonprofit Development and Pluralism Washington, DC www.mosaica.org		■	■	■	■			
OMG Center for Collaborative Learning Philadelphia, PA www.omgcenter.org *Note: Does not provide standardized trainings.*	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Organizational Research Services Seattle, WA www.organizationalresearch.com *Note: Does not provide standardized trainings.*	■	■	■	■	■	■		Theory of change/logic model development
TCC Group New York, NY www.tccgrp.com	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Advocacy Core Capacity Assessment Tool

Looking Ahead

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

November 5-8, 2008: Advocacy Sessions at AEA 2008

Denver, CO, USA

The American Evaluation Association 2008 conference will be here soon! Conference sessions are scheduled for Wednesday, November 5 through Saturday, November 8 in Denver, Colorado.

The Advocacy and Policy Change Topical Interest Group (TIG), which promotes this type of evaluation and facilitates communication, learning, and support among evaluators, will host fifteen sessions throughout the conference:

To access the complete TIG schedule, go to www.eval.org/search08/search.asp and select the "Advocacy and Policy Change TIG" from the last drop down menu.

As of the date of this publication, the Advocacy and Policy Change TIG scheduled the following fifteen sessions:

1. Online Evaluation Resources: Knowledge Sharing for the Field

2. Building a Bridge Between Evaluation and Public Policy Worlds

3. Evaluating the Impact of Using a Human Rights Framework to Engender Social Change

4. Striving for Alignment: One Funder's Lessons in Supporting Advocacy

5. Complex Challenges in Evaluating Advocacy: Internal Governance Structures and Public Policy Dispute Resolutions

6. Practical Guidance and Tools for Advocacy Evaluation

7. Advocacy and Policy Change TIG Business Meeting

8. Community Organizing Evaluation: Crossing the Next Frontier

9. Assessing Foundation Communications: A New Tool for Practitioners

10. [Roundtable Rotation I: Developing Advocacy Evidence Systems and More Systematic Approaches for Gathering and Sharing Credible Advocacy Evidence: Lessons Learned from International Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)](#)
    and
    [Roundtable Rotation II: Out of the Frying Pan and Into the Fire: When Evaluators Enter the World of Policy](#)

11. [Power to the People: Engaging Communities in Advocacy Evaluation](#)

12. [Practical Methodology for Evaluating Advocacy Efforts](#)

13. [Evaluating Policy Efforts Through Systems and Organization Theories](#)

14. [Putting Methods into Practice: Case Examples of Advocacy Evaluation](#)

15. [Expanding Advocacy Capacity: Findings From the Evaluation of The California Endowment Clinic Consortia Policy and Advocacy Program](#)

Visit the AEA 2008 conference website: www.eval.org/eval2008.