Advocacy Evaluation Update

ADVANCES IN THEORY, METHODS, AND PRACTICE

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FEATURE

Advocacy Evaluation and Rigor

Lily Zandniapour and Kathy Brennan from Innovation Network explore what it means to be methodologically rigorous in the field of advocacy evaluation.

The growing interest in using advocacy as a strategy for achieving social change has sparked a lively discussion on how to document and measure the success of advocacy strategies. Naturally, this discussion has led to a consideration of the challenges involved with evaluating advocacy, which is generally complex and hard to measure. Consideration of these challenges has, in turn, sparked an important conversation among evaluation stakeholders: What constitutes a methodologically rigorous evaluation, and what does this imply for the evaluation of advocacy and policy change efforts?

This article considers the definition of rigor in social science evaluation, specifically for advocacy efforts. It challenges the notion that for a social science evaluation to be rigorous it must use a specific design or methodology. It proposes a broader, more holistic definition of rigor that focuses on embedding quality research standards and practice in each step of the evaluation process.

The Context for a Discussion on Rigor

This is an era, globally, of increased interest in accountability, performance measurement, and transparency.[1] In the U.S., recent events and economic trends have heightened this interest. The stock market collapse and economic downturn have negatively impacted the endowments of private and public foundations and diminished government resources allocated to addressing social issues. With limited resources and a heightened emphasis

1 Patton, M.Q. (2010). Future trends in evaluation. in From Policies to Results: Developing Capacities for Country Monitoring and Evaluation Systems. UNICEF.

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In This Issue

What's New at the Center for Evaluation Innovation

Letter From The Editor

Usually spring is a time for growth and renewal, but this fall, the Center for Evaluation Innovation is experiencing several signs of growth and development.

- **A new staff member.** I am thrilled that Tanya Beer has joined the Center for Evaluation Innovation as its Associate Director. Tanya comes from The Colorado Trust where she was Assistant Director of Research, Evaluation, and Strategic Learning. As Associate Director for the Center, Tanya will work with me to lead the Center's work, particularly in the areas of systems change and advocacy evaluation.

- **A new website.** We have a new website at **www.evaluationinnovation.org.** The site offers more information about the Center for Evaluation Innovation's focus areas and current work. It also offers a full listing of the publications we have produced so far, including issues of this newsletter.

- **New resources.** The Center is a publishing outlet for individuals and organizations who want to write about new and innovative ideas in evaluation theory, methods, and practice. We have just released three new briefs from authors David Devlin-Foltz and Lisa Molinaro at Continuous Progress

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on performance, there is more pressure to maximize return on investment. Also, international funding streams and resources are increasingly tied to performance targets, benchmarks, and milestones (for example, the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals).

Funders—government agencies and foundations alike—are looking more carefully at how to compare competing programs and initiatives, and are striving to identify programs that are "evidence based." They naturally want to invest resources where the likelihood of getting the desired results is high. This context of intense scrutiny is an important backdrop; it has raised the stakes in the social science evaluation process, both in how outcomes are documented and measured, and how rigor is defined or addressed.

What is Meant By Rigor in Social Science Evaluation?

What is meant by "rigor" varies widely based on the subject being discussed. In the physical sciences, the concept of rigor is inextricably tied to studies that use an experimental design. In medicine, for example, experimental studies randomly assign study participants to either a control group or an experimental group. The control group receives no treatment, or a placebo, while the experimental group follows the treatment protocol or receives the drug being tested. Effects for the groups are then compared. The point is to determine whether the treatment caused a particular outcome. Experimental designs definitively answer the question: "All other things being equal, does the treatment work?"

> We propose a holistic definition of rigor that focuses on embedding quality research standards and practice in each step of the evaluation process.

The use of experimental designs in the physical sciences has led some to apply the same definition of rigor to the social sciences. The argument is that for an evaluation to be rigorous it must use the "gold standard" of experimental design. Experimental designs are often treated as synonymous with rigor. Quasi-experimental designs, which use comparison groups instead of randomly assigned control groups, are considered second best. Other approaches are deemed as "soft science" and less valuable, or are even dismissed altogether.

Many evaluators find this narrow definition of rigor problematic. The reasons may be practical—experimental designs may not be possible on technical, financial, or ethical grounds. The reasons may also be logical—experimental designs may not be a good fit with an evaluation's intended purpose. This narrow definition also leads some to use experimental designs without considering other alternatives. This is problematic because applying an impractical, unfeasible, or inappropriate approach without thinking through other available options is, by definition, not rigorous.

The Challenge of Advocacy Evaluation

Advocacy provides a good context for exploring this issue further. First, there are technical reasons why it is often not possible to use experimental designs with advocacy. Advocates operate in a rapidly changing and unpredictable environment. This external context introduces a variable element that renders impossible the "all other things being equal" requirement for experimental success. Advocates cannot assume that they can control such variables; indeed, recognizing the variables and responding to them can be key to advocacy success. Also, the concepts of random assignment and control groups do not translate well to an advocacy context. Advocacy messaging is often broadly targeted and its reach is diffuse, meaning advocates cannot control with precision who hears or sees their messages and when. Experimental designs require more control than advocacy efforts typically allow.

Experimental design is also sometimes a poor fit for evaluating advocacy because it is incompatible with its purpose. An experimental evaluation attempts to prove direct causality between an intervention and its outcomes or impacts. Usually in advocacy work, success results from a confluence of many factors. There are multiple forces and partners in play. Unlike a drug or a treatment protocol, one organization's activities cannot be examined in isolation from this broader context. Attempting to prove that one organization's efforts caused a particular outcome—such as a policy win—can even be counterproductive: It can damage relationships with other organizations working toward similar goals.

With advocacy, the evaluation's purpose is often more about supporting learning and improvement while advocacy efforts are implemented. New approaches to evaluation have emerged specifically for complex efforts like advocacy that evolve over time. These more flexible, non-experimental approaches include, for example, developmental evaluation,[2] or strategic learning.[3] These approaches do not make definitive judgments about success or failure. Rather, they provide feedback, generate learning, and either support strategy decisions or affirm changes to them. This informs advocacy strategy as it evolves, so advocates can progress toward their goals.

A Broader Definition of Rigor

If we accept that experimental design is not usually the most appropriate approach for evaluating advocacy efforts, then the question becomes: If some of the most useful approaches for evaluating advocacy are non-experimental, how do we guarantee that advocacy evaluations are rigorous?

The proposal here is that the definition of rigor be broader: A rigorous evaluation should embed sound evaluation principles and practices into each step of the process, to ensure credible and useful results and minimize bias. The U.S. Government

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2 Patton, M.Q. (2011). *Developmental evaluation*. New York: The Guilford Press.
3 Coffman, J., Reed, E., Morariu, J., Ostenso, L., & Stamp, A. (2010). *Evaluation for strategic learning: Principles, practice, and tools.* Washington, DC: Center for Evaluation Innovation and Innovation Network.

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Accountability Office supports the assertion that focusing solely on experimental design excludes many beneficial evidence-gathering processes.[4] Other research designs **can** provide rigorous evidence of effectiveness, as long as they are well designed and implemented.

The following techniques support rigorous—that is, credible, useful, and unbiased—evaluation results.

During planning

- **Clearly define the evaluation's purpose, or how it will be used.** Is it to demonstrate accountability and impact to a funder? Measure progress toward goals? Learn how a strategy can be improved? Identify best practices? The purpose of the evaluation should drive what methodologies are used and how the evaluation is designed.

- **Develop evaluation questions that match the evaluation's purpose, and then choose the most appropriate design and methods to answer those questions.** Different designs are more or less appropriate for different evaluation purposes and questions. For example, an experimental design is not the best choice for answering evaluation questions about progress, continuous improvement, or best practices. Alternatively, developmental evaluation can be a good choice for questions about progress, particularly for emergent strategies. Comparative case studies can be a good choice for questions about best practices.

> Applying an impractical, unfeasible, or inappropriate approach without thinking through other available options is, by definition, not rigorous.

During implementation

- **Systematically collect and analyze data to make sure the conclusions drawn are accurate, credible, and take alternative explanations into account.** For example, use mixed methods—both qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches. Use sound sampling techniques to ensure viewpoints are as representative as possible. Triangulate data collection so that questions are addressed using data from multiple sources and from multiple methods. Using multiple data collection methods and checks helps ensure the rigor of the process, no matter what the overarching methodology is.

- **Openly discuss and explore alternative conclusions.** Before finalizing evaluation reporting, ask others to consider the same data to see if they reach the same conclusions. Check back with key informants on the accuracy of data and reasonableness of interpretations. Present the evidence to an advisory group to ensure that the data hold similar meaning for multiple stakeholder groups. Use peer review and ask other evaluation experts to critically review evaluation methods and findings.

During reporting

- **Share the results with the intended users in meaningful ways, so they can be put to good use.** Make findings clear and accessible. Long technical reports are not useful in many circumstances. Advocacy efforts, for example, tend to benefit from more frequent evaluation reporting that is as close to real-time as possible. A monthly report on media messaging is more useful for advocates in adjusting their strategy than a 60-page year-end evaluation report.

Conclusion

In order to understand the nature of advocacy work and evaluate it effectively, we must move away from viewing experimental design as the gold standard and adopt a more holistic definition of rigor—that is, "Embedding sound evaluation practices to produce credible and useful results." Evaluation stakeholders must be aware of the negative consequences of adopting a narrow definition of rigor—evaluations that use an inappropriate methodology in the name of rigor are not as useful as they could be.

All methods have limitations, but it is important to discuss rigor openly alongside the advantages and disadvantages of using different designs and methods. Conversations about rigor will be more fruitful when they involve a broadened view of rigor and more carefully examine how to embed it in all evaluation stages—from early decisions about purpose and evaluation questions, to later data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Dr. Lily Zandniapour is Executive Director and Kathy Brennan is a Senior Associate at Innovation Network.

4 United States Government Accountability Office (November 2009). *Program evaluation: A variety of rigorous methods can help to identify effective interventions.* GAO 10-30 Effective Interventions.

Editor's Column, continued from page 1

Strategic Services on their method for tracking advocacy champions; Barbara Klugman on evaluating social justice advocacy; and Beth Rosen Cohen on evaluating impact at The Humane Society of the US.

What's New about the *Advocacy Evaluation Update*

We have standardized some things about the ***Advocacy Evaluation Update***. First and foremost, we are dedicated to providing original content in each newsletter. Articles are written specifically for the newsletter. Articles are also a little longer now, allowing authors to dive deeper into the topics featured.

In addition, every issue now has four articles:

- ***Feature***: Discusses an emerging issue, theme, or "hot topic" in the advocacy evaluation field.
- ***Profile from the Field:*** Introduces evaluators, advocates, or funders both here in the U.S. and around the world who are engaged in advocacy evaluation.
- ***Spotlight:*** Discusses an interesting method, idea, or resource.
- ***Editor's Picks:*** Highlights new advocacy evaluation resources, events, or opportunities.

Finally, the newsletter can be viewed on the Center's website in HTML or in PDF, and individual articles are available through our searchable database.

We invite you to contribute to our newsletter. Contact me if you want to write an article on your work, or have an idea for a topic or resource that you think should be featured.

Julia Coffman

Julia Coffman, Director
jcoffman@evaluationinnovation.org

EDITORS' PICKS

JOURNAL
Nonprofit Policy Forum

Beginning in fall 2010, this refereed international journal will publish original research and analysis on public policy issues and the public policy process as it relates to nonprofit organizations. Its audiences are scholars, leaders, and policymakers worldwide. Articles will contribute to the development of nonprofit policy research, define the role of nonprofits in the policy and advocacy process, and build a stronger research base on public policy and nonprofit organizations. **aysps.gsu.edu/nsp/index.html**

EVALUATION
Oxfam GB Climate Change Campaign Evaluation

Oxfam GB recently released an external evaluation report on its Climate Change campaign that looked at its ability to influence debates, policies, and practices on a fair and safe climate change deal at Copenhagen in December 2009. This evaluation, conducted by Dr. Brian Cugelman and Eva Otero, looks at Oxfam GB's global climate change campaign with in-depth case studies from Bangladesh, South Africa, and the UK. **publications.oxfam.org.uk/display.asp?k=e2010052510445723**

JOURNAL
Civil Society, Social Movements and Transitional Justice

This refereed journal publishes articles in the growing field of transitional justice, the study of strategies used by states and international institutions to deal with human rights abuses. Topics covered by the journal include civil society, social movements, institutional transformation, and many others. The journal welcomes articles that discuss the evaluation of transitional justice efforts. **www.ijtj.oxfordjournals.org**

BOOK
Developmental Evaluation

This new book from Michael Quinn Patton describes developmental evaluation, an approach to evaluation that is particularly well suited for efforts, like advocacy, that are complex and evolve over time. Developmental evaluation features close partnering between evaluators and those engaged in social change efforts. The book has extensive case examples and stories, sidebars, and summary tables. It offers guidance on how to make evaluations useful, practical, and credible in support of social change. Available from Guilford Press. **www.guilford.com**

We invite you to write for the *Advocacy Evaluation Update*. Contact us if you have an article idea.

Stop by our exhibitor table at the American Evaluation Association conference in San Antonio, TX on November 10 –13. **www.eval.org/eval2010**

PROFILES from the FIELD

Dr. Paul Zeitz, The Global AIDS Alliance

Laura Ostenso, associate at Innovation Network, spoke with Dr. Paul Zeitz, executive director and co-founder of the Global AIDS Alliance (GAA), about the evaluation of the Campaign to End Pediatric HIV/AIDS (CEPA).

Please tell us about the Global AIDS Alliance and CEPA.

The Global AIDS Alliance (GAA) launched in 2001. At the time, there was strong demand from health and aid advocates internationally for an organization to mobilize advocacy on global AIDS issues. GAA provides a vehicle and a voice for holding governments accountable for ending the global AIDS pandemic. We do our work in collaboration with a broad array of civil society partners, including U.S. and global AIDS advocates, humanitarian and relief agencies, and faith-based organizations.

The Campaign to End Pediatric HIV/AIDS (CEPA) is a transnational advocacy campaign we launched to (1) eliminate parent-to-child HIV/AIDS (PPTCT+) transmission; and (2) increase access and coverage to pediatric HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services. Currently, governments provide insufficient resources to achieve universal coverage for prevention and treatment services.

We want to increase resources for these services around the world, with an initial focus in six countries: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Nigeria, and Mozambique. We are tapping into GAA advocacy networks in these countries, as well as at the regional and global level. Of course, the number of partners around the world who are working with CEPA make it hard to measure our progress! But we are learning all the time about how to do that, and about how to have a greater impact in this arena.

How did you begin to integrate evaluation into your work?

We had always been interested in evaluating our work at GAA. CEPA provided our first opportunity to really *integrate* or embed evaluation into what we are doing. We wrote monitoring and evaluation (M&E) directly into the funding proposal. When it was approved, our key funder, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), decided to directly invest in an M&E partner to support the campaign. The M&E partner would also conduct mid-term and final program reviews with oversight by an independent review panel. CIFF requested that GAA conduct a global search for models and approaches that were applicable to transnational advocacy movements. This is how we connected with iScale (**www.scalingimpact.net**) and learned about their "Impact Planning, Assessment, Reporting, and Learning" (IPARL) approach. iScale appealed to us because their approach is flexible and syncs monitoring and evaluation to our advocacy timeline. Conventional evaluation doesn't fit well with the chaotic nature of advocacy. CIFF agreed that iScale was the best partner to support the CEPA effort.

> iScale's approach to evaluation appealed to us because it is flexible and syncs monitoring and evaluation to our advocacy timeline. Conventional evaluation doesn't fit well with the chaotic nature of advocacy.

Another challenge was the scope. The evaluation needed to account for the work occurring at our headquarters in Washington, D.C., and among our large network of regional and in-country advocates, through our local-to-global campaign network. Based on IPARL, we developed a comprehensive theory of change for the campaign. In so doing, the evaluation helped to create synergy among the local, regional, and global partners; it became almost like a connective tissue to ensure that we could develop an aligned agenda and a common approach to learning, course correction, and monitoring advocacy impact.

Can you tell us about the IPARL approach?

The IPARL approach supports our ongoing learning and informs CEPA strategy as it evolves. Its goals are to assess our outcomes and impact, strengthen relationships within the network, sustain credibility and legitimacy, and educate our key stakeholders.

One of the first things we did in planning the evaluation was to identify the outcomes we are trying to achieve. Our campaign is focused on achieving interim outcomes in three years that will meaningfully contribute to our long-term goal of reducing cases of pediatric HIV/AIDS overall. CEPA's interim outcomes include, for example, raising awareness among policymakers, constituents, and the media about the need for increased pediatric HIV/AIDS services.

Some of our methods for tracking those outcomes are:

- **Scorecards** that illustrate our progress in attaining key performance indicators that link to our interim outcomes (such as affecting policy decisions and/or documents, and increasing media coverage of CEPA issues)
- **"Evidence of change"** journals that document evidence of advocacy impacts, such as when, who, and with what information a policymaker, member of the press, or network partner calls to request information about CEPA.
- **Comparative case studies** that examine *which* advocacy strategies worked and *how* they worked in different contexts (e.g.., in different countries and with different partners).

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Most importantly, the IPARL approach helps us to keep our focus on what we need to do to achieve *people-level impact*. By this, I mean that even though that one aspect of our advocacy work is aimed at securing funds, we are ultimately trying to help real people who are most in need of treatment and prevention services in our focus countries.

To have people-level impact, we must look at potential "bottlenecks" that can prevent our outcomes from being achieved. We monitor two types of bottlenecks—implementation and policy. Implementation bottlenecks include, for example, a lack of local skilled health care professionals to provide pediatric care. Policy bottlenecks include things like an overreliance on external funding for antiretroviral medications, or funding shortfalls and delays in disbursement from both domestic and international sources.

Using monitoring and evaluation to help us keep our focus on what we need to do to have people-level impact instills integrity into our work. We aren't just securing funds for parent-to-child transmission and pediatric treatment programs for the sake of it. We are ensuring the funds are used to treat and prevent pediatric HIV/AIDS on the ground. Watching for bottlenecks also allows for continuous learning because we monitor our work to ensure that we overcome these barriers.

To have people-level impact, we must look at potential "bottlenecks" that can prevent our outcomes from being achieved. We monitor two types of bottlenecks—implementation and policy.

What has surprised you, if anything, about the CEPA evaluation?

The most exciting thing is that IPARL has moved us away from basing our monitoring and evaluation efforts primarily on activities and outputs. We now focus on outcomes. The whole process of clarifying those outcomes (which happened across all of our 40-50 partner organizations!) changed our thinking and got us on the same page. It had a ripple effect and helped us take rapid steps forward on our advocacy.

The system we developed is fairly elaborate and required a great deal of refinement. We even edited it live and voted on it. In the end, when there was consensus, we had a seven-part advocacy agenda, which we call the CEPA Nexus, which was agreed by all of the national, regional, and global partners. (The agenda focuses on integrating specific HIV/AIDS guidelines into policies, increasing funding allocations to pediatric HIV/AIDS programs, and overcoming implementation barriers such as lack of trained health professionals in focus countries.)

Really, it is fascinating, because agenda setting is the cornerstone of strategic advocacy and IPARL streamlined that process. The process of planning our monitoring and evaluation brought us to consensus on what we are trying to achieve, and now makes us accountable. It felt almost like marriage—we truly committed to achieving our agenda.

What lessons about evaluation would you pass on to other advocates?

CEPA's use of IPARL has shown us that evaluation can help us improve our advocacy results. Even the process of planning the evaluation was useful. It is our moral responsibility to do this work to the best of our ability because it affects people. This requires that we be accountable, and thus responsible to adapt, learn, and then apply what we have learned to complex global challenges.

I would also say that the monitoring and evaluation game has changed in two ways: There is less money for advocacy and evaluation, while at the same time there is more demand for accountability. It is challenging, but there are common denominators that make evaluation like IPARL really important for advocacy. They include:

Instilling Integrity: IPARL has helped us know that we are making progress and know that our advocacy is achieving results. We are keeping our word on achieving our goals.

Optimizing what we already have: We have many mechanisms (such as the United Nations' Millenium Development Goals) for trying to reduce global health problems like malaria, HIV/AIDS, and even pediatric HIV/AIDS.But, we do not optimize these mechanisms as much as we could. We have urgent problems, and evaluation helps us to be adaptable in solving complex global challenges.

Moving money into people-level impact: Advocacy needs to achieve people-level impact in the long run. We have to focus on what is realistic to achieve in the timeframes we are working in, but our work and our evaluations must keep the focus on real results for real people.

Dr. Paul Zeitz earned his medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed an M.P.H. and a preventive medicine residency at Johns Hopkins University.

He has nearly two decades of experience as a public health specialist in developing nations, and has held positions with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For more information about CEPA, visit **www.globalaidsalliance.org/index.php/1032#network.**

For more information on iScale, visit **www.scalingimpact.net.**

For more detailed information on CEPA's transnational network advocacy, including its evaluation, download the July 2010 report, Accelerating National-Level ACTION to End Pediatric HIV/AIDS: An Advocacy Toolkit. (**www.globalaidsalliance.org/index.php/1472**

SPOTLIGHT

A User's Perspective on an Advocacy Evaluation Planning Tool

Moria Cappio and Melanie Reyes from the Children's Aid Society share how using an advocacy evaluation planning tool helped them reinvent family engagement strategies in their East Harlem Early Head Start/Head Start program.

Four years ago, our East Harlem Early Head Start and Head Start program began the accidental voyage of re-inventing our family engagement strategies to include parent civic advocacy. Our program serves nearly 90 families with children from birth to age five. The great majority of families served are recent Mexican immigrants. Our journey began as our staff became increasingly aware of parents' fear and distrust of the police. In parents' eyes, Immigration and the New York Police Department were synonymous, which led to serious public safety concerns. Crimes such as theft, unsafe housing, and gang activity went unreported because parents feared deportation.

Advocating for the Rights of Undocumented Families

To improve the situation, we formed a partnership with our local police precinct. Police began spending time in our preschools in nonthreatening ways; parents took tours of the Precinct; and together we hosted community forums geared towards educating families on their rights. Parents also took the lead in organizing trainings for rookie police officers on how to be sensitive to the needs of the immigrant community.

Parents also helped forge a relationship with the Mexican Consulate. This collaboration resulted in nearly 3,400 East Harlem residents receiving Mexican Passports or a Matricula Consular ID Card.[1] Following the work with the consulate, we became involved in the East Harlem Against Deportation movement, led by our State Senator's office. Parents organized a letter-writing campaign and contributed to a specific policy agenda to protect undocumented immigrants in New York City and New York State.

An Innovative Solution to a Communications Problem

By the fall of 2009, parents and children were teeming into our Head Start programs in unprecedented numbers. Parents were becoming involved in activities and supporting their children's learning in ways that we had never seen. Parents felt safe in our programs, and built trusting relationships with other families and our staff. However, it was becoming difficult to communicate the importance of, and rationale behind, advocacy work of this type. The communications problem was both internal and external. Within our agency, the Head Start standards and our auditors did not think about parent involvement in the same way that we were. Externally, our funders were not used to seeing a Head Start program engaging in civic advocacy efforts. We began asking ourselves how we could better communicate our purpose to all of our stakeholders, and how we could use data to track our growth in the advocacy arena.

Use of an Advocacy Evaluation Planning Tool

We discovered an advocacy evaluation tool developed by Harvard Family Research Project (www.hfrp.org) called *A User's Guide to Advocacy Evaluation Planning*. We decided to use the Guide as a framework to reflect on our work mid-stream and to help us strategically plan for the upcoming year. The tool has four main steps:focusing, mapping, prioritizing, and designing.

1. **Focusing:** The Guide forced us to think about *who* might use any data we might collect, and *how* that data could be used. The tool helped us think beyond the parent and child data we were accustomed to collecting, such as attendance rates, developmental checklists, and satisfaction surveys. We began to think about more specific advocacy data, including media tracking, coalition building, and changes in parents' confidence levels and knowledge as a result of advocacy involvement. We agreed that data would help us make informed strategic decisions as well as help us communicate more effectively with our funders and external partners.

> The advocacy tool forced us to think about who might use any data we might collect as well as how that data could be used. It helped us think beyond the parent and child data we were accustomed to collecting.

2. **Mapping:** The tool also helped us to define our impacts and policy goals, and the current and potential tactics for achieving them. We agreed that we were looking to empower parents about their rights as immigrants in their community, and to decrease their public safety concerns. Already we had been involved in a number of advocacy activities such as using electronic media, building coalitions, and hosting briefings, and it felt good that we could finally name and categorize the work we had done.

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1 A Matricula Consular is an official I.D. card issued by the Mexican Government through its Consular Offices. The Matricula operates as a Mexican citizen's identification and proof of residency in Mexico. Within the U.S., a card holder, regardless of documentation status, can use the ID as proof of identity and to gain access to buildings and events for which a form of ID is required.

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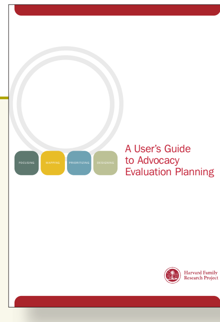
3. **Prioritizing/Designing:** We realized it would be very difficult to track the child outcomes and improvements in public safety associated with our goals. We therefore decided to focus on increasing our efforts and better measuring our advocacy activities and outputs. For example, we actively set out to build our coalition by creating a network of home visiting providers in the East Harlem area and to track their involvement in our advocacy efforts. Our home visitors had been trained to regularly talk with families around documentation issues and parents' rights, and by partnering with other home visiting programs we were able to expand the reach of our message.



Find "A User's Guide to Advocacy Evaluation Planning" from Harvard Family Research Project at **www.hfrp.org**

We also asked for the opinions and goals of parents of the families served by our programs. In listing their own priorities and goals, many parents indicated they wanted to improve their education and especially to learn English. Thus, we also sought out and acquired new funding streams to support a collaboration with a nearby university to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to parents. In line with our quest to document changes in parents' knowledge and confidence, we attached simple pre and post surveys to these modules. Finally, we are making concerted efforts to increase the number of blog posts we make and are tracking them with a simple spreadsheet. We regularly ask parents to provide testimonials and talk about parents' rights and the impact advocacy has made on their lives.

By taking an organic, innovative effort and scaffolding it with our interpretation of an advocacy evaluation framework, we are now more prepared to advocate for the rights of undocumented families.

*Moria Cappio and Melanie Reyes work at the Children's Aid Society, a nonprofit organization that serves New York's neediest children and their families at more than 45 locations in the five boroughs and Westchester County (**www.childrensaidsociety.org**).*

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM THE CENTER FOR EVALUATION INNOVATION

*Available at www.**evaluationinnovation**.org*

CASE STUDY

Measuring Impact in Practice: A Case Study of The Humane Society of the United States

Beth Rosen Cohen describes how the nation's largest animal protection organization developed an impact framework to capture its advocacy and direct service outcomes.

BRIEF

Champions and "Champion-ness": Measuring Efforts to Create Champions for Policy Change

David Devlin-Foltz and Lisa Molinaro of Continuous Progress Strategic Services describe their tool for tracking progress in engaging champions.

BRIEF

Using a Social Justice Lens in Advocacy Evaluation

South Africa and U.S. consultant Barbara Klugman discusses how to incorporate the concept of social justice and its underlying values into advocacy evaluation.

ARTICLE

Assessing Nonprofits' Communications Capacity: An Online Self-Assessment Tool

In this article from *The Foundation Review*, Anne Whatley and R. Christine Hershey from Cause Communications, Julia Coffman from the Center for Evaluation Innovation, and consultant Andre Oliver introduce a tool that can help nonprofits and their foundation supporters determine the strengths and weaknesses of their communications efforts and how to improve them.