



# *Theory, models, and instruments to conduct effective advocacy and policy change evaluation*

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# 'TURBULENT POLICY LANDSCAPE'



# OUR PROJECT

- Curate the field of advocacy and policy change (APC) evaluation:
  - ✓ 2014 Aspen/UCSF APC Evaluation Survey (N = AEA 106 evaluators, 7% AEA response rate, 9% APC TIG)
  - ✓ Six evaluation case studies
  - ✓ Review of tool-kits, models, instruments
- Strengthen the link between the scholarship on advocacy, public policy, nonprofit management, and evaluation practice

# DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Advance individual evaluation practice, particularly
  - ✓ Substantive knowledge of ‘advocacy’ and ‘policy’
  - ✓ Appropriate and rigorous designs
  - ✓ Partnerships with advocacy, funders, decision-makers
- Advance the field of advocacy and policy change evaluation

*“Bringing to bear scholarship, models, resources, and examples of useful evaluation designs and tools so that advocacy can fulfill its vision more effectively.”*

# THEORY: POLICY AND POLICYMAKING

- Achieving systems-level change to improve social and environmental conditions
- Complex, uncertain policymaking process and political context.
- Evaluators have robust foundation—theories of change, body of APC evaluation practice— on which they can draw

# THEORY: ADVOCACY

*“Championing or supporting a cause or a policy goal.”  
(Obar, Zube, and Lampe 2012)*

- A broad swath of society—individuals, organizations, policymakers, groups, social movement. But not all voices are equal.
- A vast cachet of advocacy tactics with which to mobilize a community, advance a policy.



# CURRENT EVALUATION PRACTICE: ASPEN/UCSF APC EVALUATION SURVEY

- Early adopters of new instruments, emerging models
- Low use of experimental designs—6 percent
- Gaps in content expertise—policy areas, political context
- Practice dominated by health policy but APC evaluators work in multiple policy arenas
- Funding—a perennial concern

Advocacy Activities	Percent of Aspen/UCSF Survey Respondents that Focus on Tactic
<b>Mobilizing Citizens and Organizing Advocacy Allies</b>	
Coalition building	59%
Community organizing (also referred to as community mobilization)	52%
Protests or demonstration	6%
<b>Expanding Public and Policymaker Awareness</b>	
Public awareness campaigns	59%
Public will campaigns	36%
Media advocacy	48%
Voter outreach	7%
<b>Influencing Policymaker Support</b>	
Influencer/influential education	48%
Policymaker education	46%
Champion development	36%
Political will campaigns	32%
Lobbying	25%
<b>Researching and Monitoring Policy</b>	
Policy analysis and research	55%
Regulatory feedback	21%
Budget monitoring	20%
Model legislation	18%
Litigation	2%

# CURRENT EVALUATION PRACTICE: SIX EVALUATION CASES

- The *Initiative to Promote Equitable and Sustainable Transportation* (2008 – 2013) Adoption of policies for equitable and sustainable **transportation options** in the U.S.
- The *Let Girls Lead program* (2009 – present). Creation of a global movement of leaders and organizations advocating for adolescent **girls' rights**.
- The *GROW Campaign* (2012 – present). A multi-national campaign to tackle **food injustice** and build a better food system that sustainably feeds a growing population.
- The *International Lands Conservation Program* (1999 – present). Conserve **old-growth forests** and extend wilderness areas in Canada and Australia;
- *Project Health Colorado* (2011-2013), a public will building campaign that engaged individuals and organizations in a statewide discussion about **health care**; and
- The *Tribal Tobacco Education and Policy (TTEP) Initiative* (2008-2013). Pass or expand formal and informal **smoke-free policies** at five Tribes.

# SAMPLE CASE EVALUATION: THE *TRIBAL TOBACCO EDUCATION AND POLICY (TTEP) INITIATIVE*

- *Advocacy strategy and tactics:* local-level advocacy capacity building, community education, and passage of smoke-free policies
- *Design:*
  - ▶ Formative and summative. Included a logic model
  - ▶ Participatory approach to facilitate strategic learning (e.g., “sharing sessions”) sensitive to cultural context and historical antecedents
  - ▶ Mixed-methods: web-based monthly data collection, media analysis, technical assistance survey, dialoguing sessions, spider diagrams, Most Significant Change stores, Aspen Policy Mapping tool
- *Dissemination:* Site reports, 2-page Community Change stories, annual meetings at sites to reflect and celebrate. Shared locally and nationally.

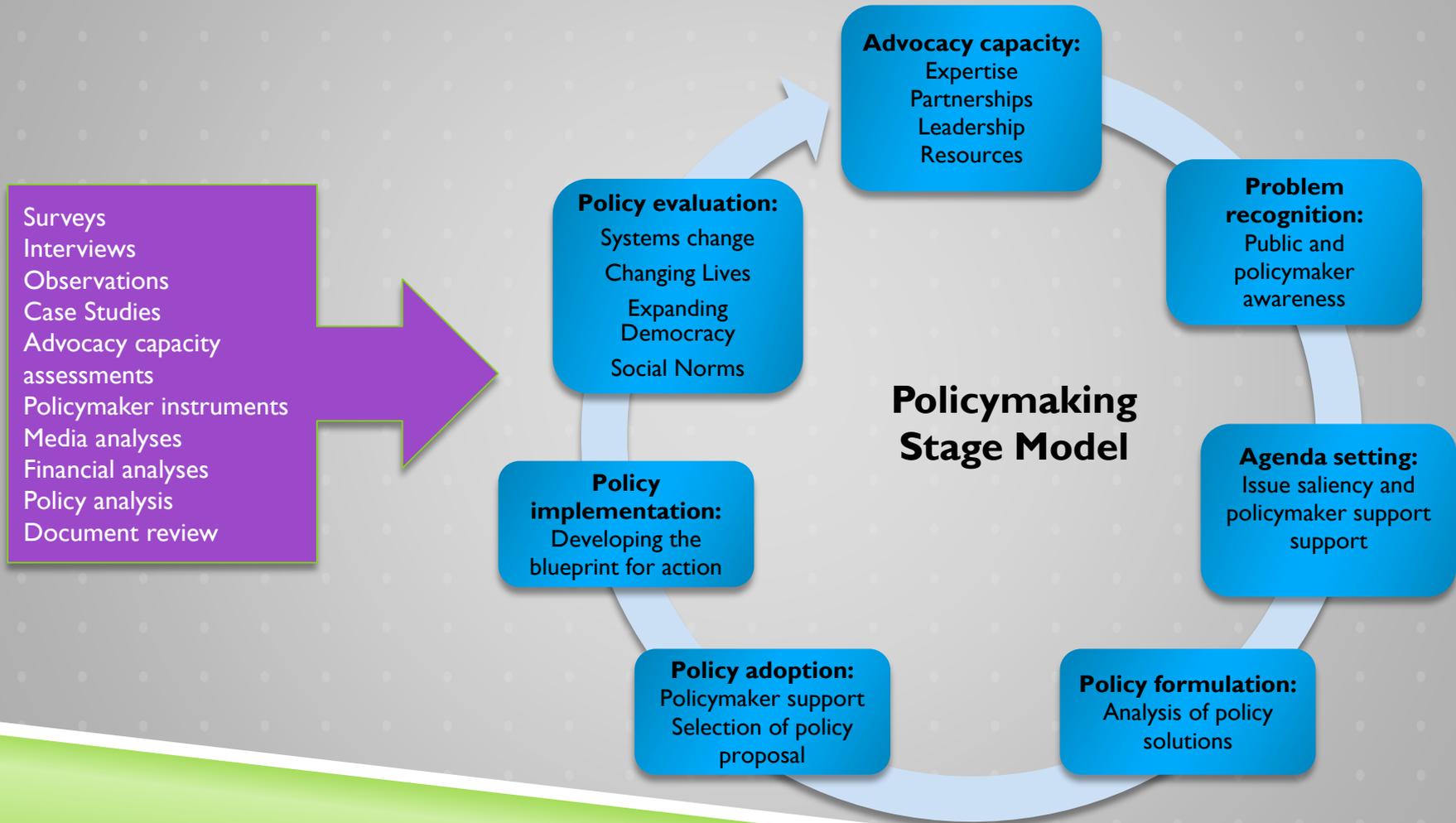
# APC EVALUATION DESIGN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ✓ Partner with funders, advocates early and often
- ✓ Determine the evaluator role
- ✓ Know the initiative and its context—clarify terms and definitions
- ✓ Embrace initiative complexity and consider different evaluation models
- ✓ Use a theory of change and/or logic model to advance stakeholder understanding
- ✓ Refer to the repository of advocacy and policy change outcomes
- ✓ Balance attribution and contribution, prove vs. improve
- ✓ Address challenges to design and issues of rigor
- ✓ Engage in effective, continuous communications

# FRAMING THE APC EVALUATION



# TRADITIONAL AND UNIQUE EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS



# ROLE OF THE EVALUATOR

- Informing advocate, funder strategic learning to increase advocacy effectiveness
- Building an evaluation culture and strengthening advocate evaluation capacity
- Informing funder grant-making
- Educating decision-makers



# EVALUATOR AS ADVOCATE?



# ADVANCING INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION PRACTICE, ADVANCING THE FIELD

- ‘Mindful’ evaluation practice – honest self-appraisal of advocacy, political, and policymaking acumen
- Bridge-building to advance the field
- Creating vehicles and venues for sharing
- Link evaluation practice and findings to the scholarship on advocacy effectiveness, models of change



# THANK YOU!

- Aspen Planning and Evaluation Program
- Center for Evaluation Innovation
- Community of APC evaluators
- Evaluation 'pioneers'
- Advocates and funders

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