



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

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June 14, 2017

'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
Mobilizing Citizens and Organizing Advocacy Allies	
Coalition building	59%
Community organizing (also referred to as community mobilization)	52%
Protests or demonstration	6%
Expanding Public and Policymaker Awareness	
Public awareness campaigns	59%
Public will campaigns	36%
Media advocacy	48%
Voter outreach	7%
Influencing Policymaker Support	
Influencer/influential education	48%
Policymaker education	46%
Champion development	36%
Political will campaigns	32%
Lobbying	25%
Researching and Monitoring Policy	
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.

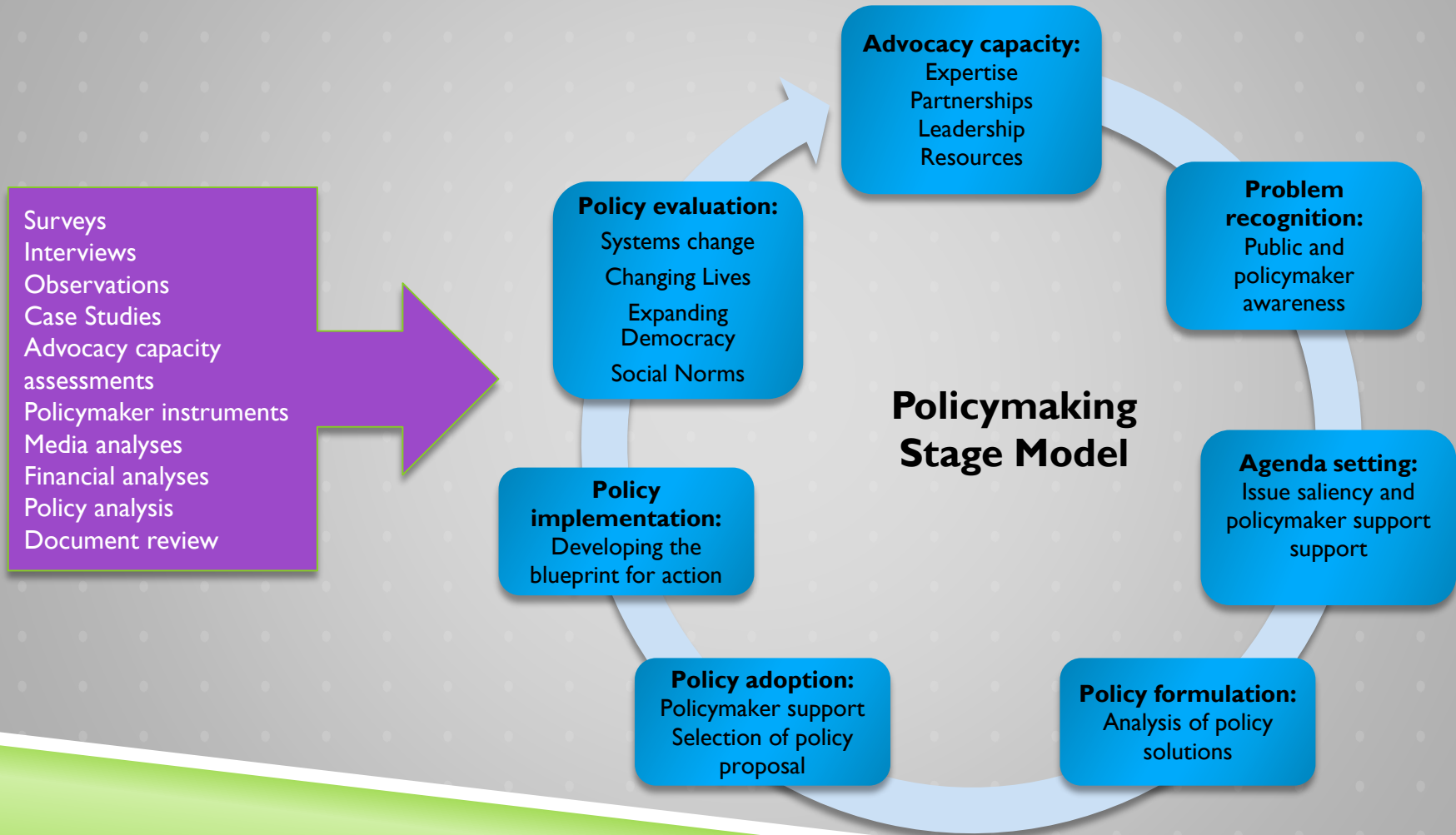
APC EVALUATION DESIGN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ✓ 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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