How do you measure advocacy?

What is M&E?

All monitoring and evaluation (M&E) asks:

- ❑ What has been done? Where, when, and by whom?
- ❑ What changed as a result of the project?
- ❑ What caused the change?

M&E of advocacy work is different, however, because advocacy work is collaborative and long-term; you have little control over its outcomes; objectives change, often at short notice; cause and effect are unpredictable; and change is qualitative.

> **Challenges of Advocacy M&E**
> 1. *Causal relationships*: Linking advocacy and outcomes is complex.
> 2. *Subjective gains*: Definition of success depends on who is asked. Targets shift.
> 3. *Multiple approaches*: It can be unclear which approach has impact.
> 4. *Long horizons*: Change can be slow and incremental.
> 5. *Changing circumstances*: Work is rarely repeated and thus there is poor knowledge accumulation.
> 6. *Conflicting political process*: Work may have political consequences.

A Framework for measuring advocacy work

Advocacy M&E requires a combination of approaches to (a) track short-term **outputs**; (b) track longer term **impacts**; and (c) understand **causality**.

Tools for tracking short-term outputs: *What happened?*

Bellwether interviews

The bellwether is a method that **determines the position of the proposed change on the policy agenda.** As a result of bellwether interviews, (a) you know if your issue is part of the policy agenda; (b) you know if you have managed to create greater visibility; and (c) you get analytical information of the type of messaging and approaches that make the best impression.

How it is done:

1. Interview **highly influential people** ("bellwethers") to determine what they think and know about a policy issue.
2. At least half the people interviewed should have **no special link** to the policy issue.
3. Bellwethers **should not be informed** of the discussion topic until the interview.
4. In the interview, bellwethers should be told the interview topic but **not the details**.

Social network analysis

This is an analytical tool for studying relationships between stakeholders. It is used at baseline, midterm, and final evaluation to **monitor the changes in relationships and structures of networks**. First, use qualitative evaluation methodologies (e.g. observation, group and individual interviews, document studies, focus groups) to better understand key relationships. Then use the below guiding questions to create a network map:

- ❑ Who are the relevant groups or individuals involved in this issue?
- ❑ Are there any identifiable groups or subgroups?
- ❑ What are their past and present relationships?

GAVI CSO Constituency

- ❑ Who trusts whom?
- ❑ Who and what groups have power and what is their source of power?
- ❑ Who are the formal and informal leaders in the field?
- ❑ How do people exchange information?
- ❑ Do networks change? For example, are they seasonal? Or do they vary around issues?
- ❑ What else is important in this particular field?

Tools for tracking longer term impacts: *What is the result of what happened?*

Progress markers and outcome journals

Progress markers help describe changes in behavior. Outcome journals record changes in progress markers. Together, they help identify the purpose of the evaluation and what standards to use. They also help you determine if your efforts are having the desired effect.

How it is done:

1. List your goals for each target group
2. List you want to see (i.e. your progress marker) in the three levels of change
   a. **Expect to see**: minimum change we would expect
   b. **Like to see**: indicators reflecting a more active and engaged behavior
   c. **Love to see**: a profound change occurs in the boundary partner
3. Decide how often you will record change and record according to schedule
4. Evaluate if your activities are having the desired effect

Tools for understanding causality: *Why did it happen?*

Stories of change

Narrative case studies report the circumstances of an observed change and the likely factors influencing it. This is description of **mechanisms or pathways by which an intervention influenced an observed change**, NOT a report of activities and outputs of the intervention. It can describe an expected or an unexpected change and can also describe a failed intervention.

Most significant change (MSC)

To find the MSC, collect significant change stories but select them systematically, according to ranking criteria and using a two-stage review process. This way you can weigh up the perspectives of different stakeholders and come to a **shared agreement about the most important changes** that have occurred, the processes and causal mechanisms that bring about change, and the situations and contexts in which change happens (or doesn't).
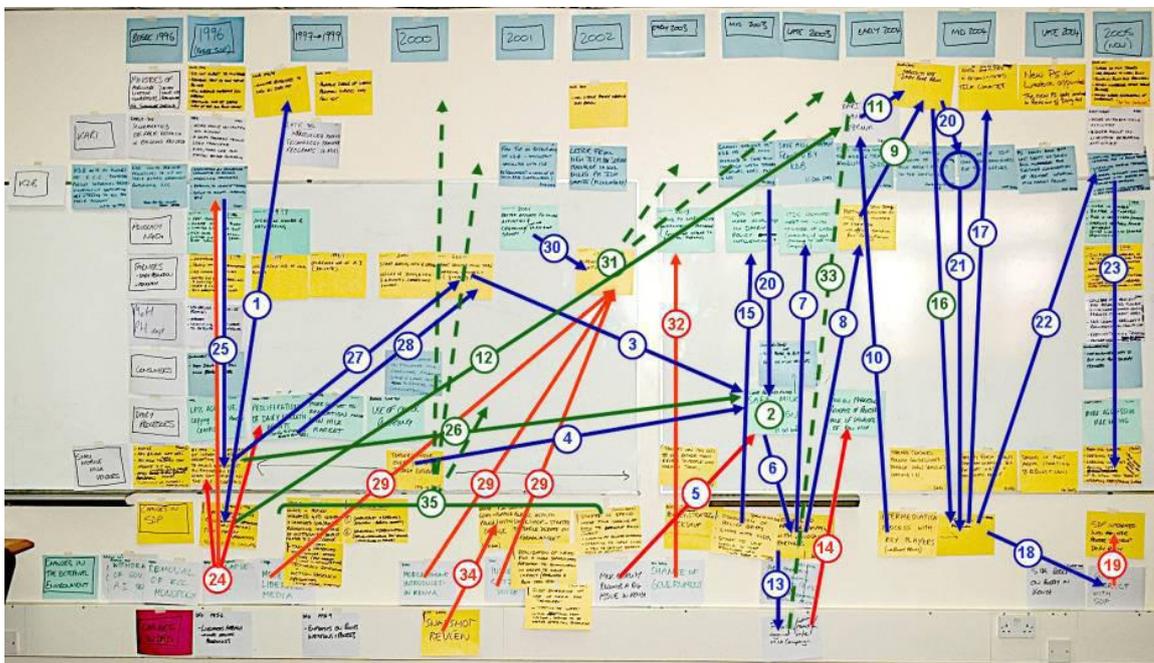
Outcome mapping

This method maps out boundary partners and key behaviors on a timeline, making **links between influence and behavior change**. It works to understand influences on policy.

How is it done:

1. **Background research** and preparation
   a. Review of reports and papers
   b. Conversations with project staff and stakeholders.

     c.   Conduct case studies of the project activities to describe what has been done, when, by whom, with whom.

     d.   Conduct episode studies -- like case studies but focused on an identified policy change, tracking back to identify the factors leading to that change.

2. **Workshop** to bring together all information, the program team's specific knowledge, and stakeholders' contextual knowledge.

     a.   Map the timeline of the initiative

     b.   Map key changes among different policy and intermediary actors

     c.   Map important changes in the external environment

     d.   Map links and influences between these different points

3. **Triangulate** and refine conclusions

     a.   Through the information gathered, the team should be able to describe the contributions of the project through observed outcomes.

     b.   The timeline identifies informants to interview which will help to triangulate the information and determine the contribution to change.

Example of a completed outcome map (taken from *Monitoring and evaluation of policy and advocacy* (Overseas Development Institute, 2014))

For more information

- ❑ [Outcome Mapping (Better Evaluation)](#)
- ❑ [Outcome Mapping (Research to Action)](#)
- ❑ [Tsui, J., Hearn, S., Young, J., (2014). *Monitoring and evaluation of policy and advocacy*. Overseas Development Institute.](#)
- ❑ [The International Development Research Centre, (2010). *Outcome Mapping*. IDRC.](#)
- ❑ [Coe, J. and Majot, J., (2013). *Monitoring, evaluation and learning in NGO advocacy*. Oxfam America and the Overseas Development Institute.](#)
- ❑ [Most Significant Change (Mande)](#)

GAVI CSO Constituency