

Evaluating Advocacy for Developing, Adopting and Implementing Public Policy

A Collection of Resources

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PREFACE

Few of us give much thought to the public policy choices made by governments, but they shape our lives in countless ways, ranging from the simple to the profound. Taken together, the legislation, regulations, resolutions, by-laws, budget appropriations, court decisions, and administrative practices of governments and their agents shape many of the systems we navigate in our daily lives.

That makes public policy important for anyone seeking to make social change. Civil society organizations across the country, with interests ranging from seniors care to climate change to early childhood education, increasingly see informing public policy as an essential part of their work.

How they do that work is never simple. The processes by which public policy gets made, and the hard realities it faces in getting implemented, are complex and dynamic. That means effective policy advocacy is always context dependent. What works in one instance, or for one part of the policy development process, may not work in another.

And that means to find success, a policy advocate needs to monitor, evaluate, and adapt as they go. This guide is intended to help with that dimension of the work. It summarizes the state of the art of evaluation tools a policy advocate may want to draw on in designing their own evaluation strategy. Its author, Mark Cabaj, is among Canada's leading thinkers in the evaluation world, and he has organized the guide with the needs of policy advocates in mind. I'm confident any of Max Bell Foundation's partners – and indeed anyone with an interest in contributing to public policy development – will find it an indispensable reference.

Allan Northcott
President, Max Bell Foundation

1. HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This document is prepared for the Max Bell Foundation and its prospective and actual grantees. It will be useful for them, and to anyone interested in planning and assessing public policy advocacy efforts.

It provides links and resources for resources, methods and techniques to assist organizations and networks to monitor and evaluate their efforts to influence public policy decisions and implementation. They are largely application oriented, rather than ‘academic’ or ‘theory-oriented’.

The document does not offer recommendations on which resources a team, organization or collaboration might employ. Good evaluation designs are always customized to reflect each unique context of each policy change initiative, and readers will have to develop their own in-house design. The resource does, however, provide a comprehensive review of tools to assist grantees create their own approach.

The resources are rated by three levels of complexity:

- Level 1 – a resource suitable for an adequately prepared novice to the evaluation field.
- Level 2 – a resource of intermediate difficulty, possible with an internal team willing to learn-by-doing.
- Level 3 – an advanced resource that requires the assistance of a skilled evaluator, preferably someone experienced in that approach.

In some cases, resources receive a combined rating (e.g., 1-3), which reflects the fact that they include elements of different levels of complexity.

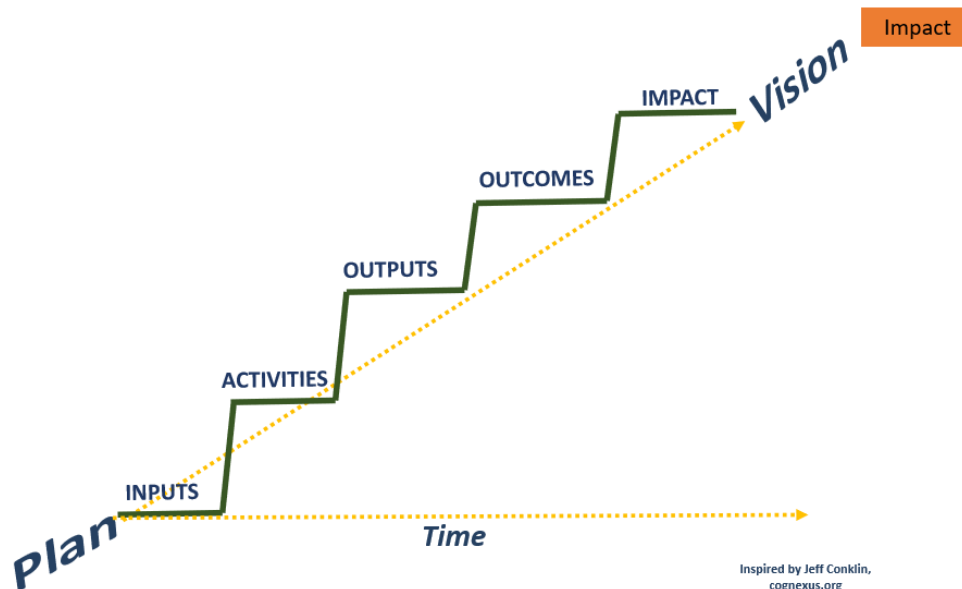
The collection is a work-in-progress. The first iteration was developed in late 2023. It will be periodically upgraded by Max Bell Foundation staff as new resources emerge and/or the Foundation’s board, staff and grantees identify new evaluation challenges for which evaluation resources are required.

2. A COMPLEXITY ORIENTATION TO EVALUATION

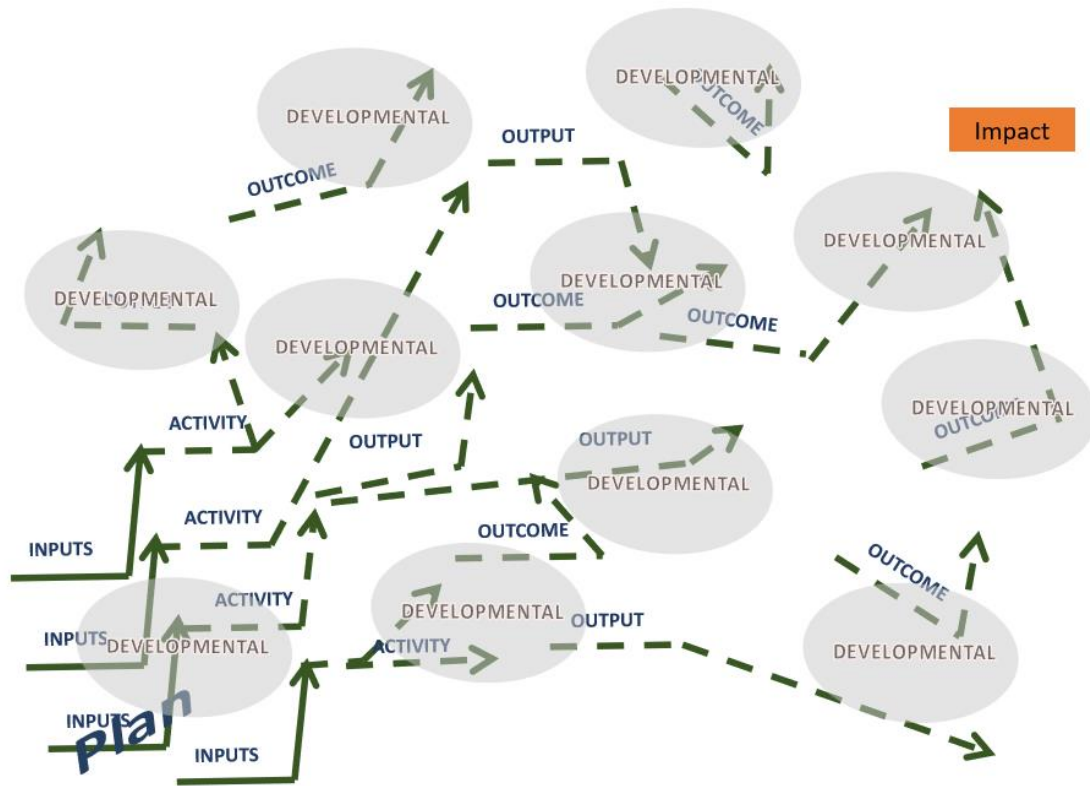
The resources provided in this document are best reviewed and applied using a complexity orientation to thinking about, planning and evaluating efforts to develop and adopt public policy.

While it is essential that advocates of policy change develop clear vision and well-thought-out plans to guide their efforts, the process of policy change is dynamic, iterative and often unpredictable. As the two diagrams below illustrate, their efforts are usually marked by multiple inflection points, dead-ends, and restarts as advocates respond to new learnings and (sometimes rapid) shifts in context: e.g., a group's research uncovers insights that prompt them to change their original framing of the policy challenge that they felt warranted attention; a new government is elected with a different set of policy priorities, requiring a change in what proposals they prioritize and promote; a provincial agency implements only a portion of a new set of regulations, which means that the original policy advocates have to re-engage policy makers and civil servants to convince them to commit to a more complete application of the proposal.

Traditional Thinking on the Policy Development Process



The Messy Reality of the Policy Development Process



The need to switch from a traditional approach to adaptive approach in developing policy also requires a similar shift from traditional evaluation to a ‘Developmental Evaluation’ (DE) approach.

Michael Quinn Patton, one of the world’s leading evaluation thinkers and practitioners, crafted the DE approach to better reflect the highly dynamic nature of social innovation, systems and policy change efforts. Table 1 illustrates the major distinctions between traditional and DE approaches to assessment.

Table 1: Traditional Versus Developmental Evaluation¹

TRADITIONAL EVALUATIONS...	COMPLEXITY-BASED, DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATIONS...
RENDER DEFINITIVE JUDGMENTS OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE.	PROVIDE FEEDBACK, GENERATE LEARNINGS, SUPPORT DIRECTION OR AFFIRM CHANGES IN DIRECTION.
MEASURE SUCCESS AGAINST PREDETERMINED GOALS.	DEVELOP NEW MEASURES AND MONITORING MECHANISMS AS GOALS EMERGE & EVOLVE.
POSITION THE EVALUATOR OUTSIDE TO ASSURE INDEPENDENCE AND OBJECTIVITY	POSITION EVALUATION AS AN INTERNAL, TEAM FUNCTION INTEGRATED INTO ACTION AND ONGOING INTERPRETIVE PROCESSES.
DESIGN THE EVALUATION BASED ON LINEAR CAUSE-EFFECT LOGIC MODELS.	DESIGN THE EVALUATION TO CAPTURE SYSTEM DYNAMICS, INTERDEPENDENCIES, AND EMERGENT INTERCONNECTIONS.
AIM TO PRODUCE GENERALIZABLE FINDINGS ACROSS TIME AND SPACE.	AIM TO PRODUCE CONTEXT-SPECIFIC UNDERSTANDINGS THAT INFORM ONGOING INNOVATION.
ACCOUNTABILITY FOCUSED ON AND DIRECTED TO EXTERNAL AUTHORITIES AND FUNDERS.	ACCOUNTABILITY CENTERED ON THE INNOVATORS' DEEP SENSE OF FUNDAMENTAL VALUES AND COMMITMENTS.
ACCOUNTABILITY TO CONTROL AND LOCATE BLAME FOR FAILURES.	LEARNING TO RESPOND TO LACK OF CONTROL AND STAY IN TOUCH WITH WHAT'S UNFOLDING AND THEREBY RESPOND STRATEGICALLY.
EVALUATOR CONTROLS THE EVALUATION AND DETERMINES THE DESIGN BASED ON THE EVALUATOR'S PERSPECTIVE ON WHAT IS IMPORTANT.	EVALUATOR COLLABORATES IN THE CHANGE EFFORT TO DESIGN A PROCESS THAT MATCHES PHILOSOPHICALLY AND ORGANIZATIONALLY.
EVALUATION ENGENDERS FEAR OF FAILURE.	EVALUATION SUPPORTS HUNGER FOR LEARNING.

The resources described through the rest of the document are rooted in a complexity-oriented, developmental approach to evaluation, which assumes that those interested in shaping public policy will be as flexible and adaptive in their evaluation activities as they are in their policy development efforts.

¹ Patton, Michael Quinn. 2006. Evaluation For the Way Work. Non-Profit Quarterly. Volume 13. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237708450_Evaluation_for_the_way_we_work

2.1 Evaluation for the Way We Work

A short and accessible introduction to Developmental Evaluation by Patton using a very practical example.

Complexity: 1

Source:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237708450_Evaluation_for_the_way_we_work

2.2 Developmental Evaluation Companion

A relatively up to date overview of the ideas and practices of Developmental Evaluation based largely on the experience of Canadian evaluators.

Complexity: 2

Source: <https://mccconnellfoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/A-Developmental-Evaluation-Companion-McConnell-Foundation-2.pdf>

2.3 Better Evaluation Website

A more comprehensive introduction to the concept and practice of Developmental Evaluation with a link to multiple resources.

Complexity: 1-3

Source: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/developmental-evaluation>

3. FOUNDATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

The work of developing, advocating for, and ensuring the implementation of good policies is complex. Frameworks are useful ways to make that process more coherent to everyone involved, and make the following easier:

- Communicating a group's general approach
- Guiding their strategy and planning efforts
- Organizing a useful evaluation design

Frameworks can offer a useful way for policy advocates to organize their monitoring and evaluation efforts.

3.1 The Advocacy Strategy Framework

The Framework is one of the most important foundational resources that those interested in changing public policies have for reviewing the wide range of strategies available to them. It includes two dozen strategies mapped across a framework that distinguishes between different outcomes (e.g., increasing awareness, will and action) across different audiences (e.g., the public, influencers and decision-makers). Each of the unique strategies (e.g., litigation in the courts versus champion development) will require a unique evaluation approach.

Complexity: 1-3

Source: <https://www.evaluationinnovation.org/publication/the-advocacy-strategy-framework-3/>

3.2 Ten Theories of Policy Change

The resource provides a description of ten archetypical theories of change to influence public policy (e.g., community organizing, regime change, narrative change). It offers a unique ‘logic model’ and outcomes for each, with additional notes about the assumptions about their underlying ‘theory’ and practical application. It is a useful orientation document for planning and a ‘first step’ in organizing an evaluation of an initiative.

Complexity: 1

Source:

https://www.orsimpact.com/DirectoryAttachments/132018_13248_359_Center_Pathways_FIN_AL.pdf

3.3 The Multiple Streams Framework

The Multiple Stream Framework (MSF) offers a broader conception of the policy-making process than most frameworks employ. In addition to a conventional focus on (1) societal challenge, and (2) policy options to address them, it includes the (3) political context and processes in which these overlap. The framework encourages ‘policy entrepreneurs’ to identify specific ‘windows of policy opportunity,’ each with its own problems and politics to navigate in order to help influence – or take advantage of – a government’s agenda.

Complexity: 2

Source: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42972-022-00049-2>

4. GENERAL RESOURCES ON POLICY EVALUATION

The following sections provide resources that offer a general and/or comprehensive set of ideas and resources on evaluating policy change initiatives. They are unlikely to be a perfect fit for your unique effort, yet still offer a variety of useful perspectives and techniques to explore as you begin to craft your own design.

4.1 Overview of Current Advocacy Evaluation Practice

A dated but still relevant overview of advocacy evaluation practice that explores basic concepts and key questions to consider related to evaluator, focus, timing and approach.

Complexity: 1

Source:

http://www.pointk.org/client_docs/File/center_pubs/overview_current_eval_practice.pdf

4.2 Advocacy and Policy Change Evaluation: A Primer

A 2010 publication that explores six big ideas about evaluating advocacy and policy change efforts and outlines 11 methods that may be useful.

Complexity: 1

Source: https://www.orsimpact.com/DirectoryAttachments/132018_25146_808_Advocacy-and-Policy-Change-Primer.pdf

4.3 A User's Guide to Advocacy Evaluation Planning

A good all-around guide to thinking about and planning the evaluation of advocacy efforts. Focused on traditional policy change efforts yet well organized and easy to read.

Complexity: 2

Source: <https://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/a-user-s-guide-to-advocacy-evaluation-planning/>

4.4 A Guide to Policy-Influence Evaluation: Selected Resources & Case Studies

A very comprehensive and well-organized guide to evaluating policy change initiatives, with case studies, resources, worksheets and tools.

Complexity: 2-3

Source:

<https://www.nccmt.ca/uploads/media/media/0001/01/c3374b8be4b35e1340385f1b593d3bb9f50f6a38.pdf>

4.5 Advocacy & Policy Change Evaluation: Theory and Practice

A very sensible, basic and accessible review of the work of evaluating policy change work, with a thorough scan of the major challenges and tasks – including measuring progress in long term change efforts – and rooted in an appreciation of the reality of working in dynamically changing contexts.

Complexity: 1-3

Source:

https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Advocacy_and_Policy_Change_Evaluation/rUUKDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover

4.6 Better Evaluation Website

The most comprehensive website on evaluation in the world. While it focuses on the field of evaluation in general, it has many resources on evaluating policy change work and a good search engine to help you sort through all of them.

Complexity: 1-3

Sources: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/>

5. SCOPING THE EVALUATION

Effective efforts to monitor and evaluate policy change efforts begin with a systematic process of scoping out its main features. Who are the primary users of the evaluation? What part of their advocacy and policy work do they want to assess? What questions do they have? How will they use the information? What preferences do they have about how the data to answer those questions is collected, analyzed and communicated? When are the findings needed? What other factors shape if and how the evaluation will be useful? These questions must be answered before a group jumps to discussing which indicators and methods they will employ.

5.1 Rainbow Framework

The Better Evaluation ‘Rainbow’ Framework provides a comprehensive approach for planning, managing and using an evaluation. Though focused on general evaluation, the steps and actions can be adapted for policy change initiatives.

Complexity: 1-3

Source: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/tools-resources/rainbow-framework-brief-overview>

5.2 Evaluation Scope of Work

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has produced one of the most accessible and structured resources to develop an evaluation scope of work (ESOW) to guide an evaluation. This ‘users’ of the evaluation should be able to complete an ESOW – in cooperation with an evaluator – before they begin detailed design and implementation of any evaluation tools.

Complexity: 2

Source: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadw103.pdf

5.3 Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) Primer

The Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) Primer provides a summary of an approach to evaluation that aims to increase the probabilities that an evaluation is used by the people meant to use the findings. It includes 12 steps and checklists that begin with assessing a group’s readiness for evaluation and ends with ways to facilitate their use of findings.

Complexity: 2

Source: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/tools-resources/utilization-focused-evaluation-primer-for-evaluators>

6. EVALUATION BY THE PHASE

The following section describes a variety of resources, methods and techniques that can be used at different phases of the policy life cycle. This includes:

- The development of the policy option.
- The placement of the policy option on the policy-maker agenda.
- The adoption or blocking of a policy option.
- The implementation of the policy.
- The impact of the policy.

Many of these resources can also be re-organized to fit the Advocacy Strategy Framework and the Ten Theories of Policy Change frameworks.

6.1 Policy Development

There are (at least) three dimensions of the process of developing a policy proposal that advocates will need to consider and assess: their policy context, the policy process, and the quality of the emerging proposal.

6.1.1 Assessing the Policy Context

Knowledge to Policy: Making the Most of Development Research

A resource created by Fred Carden and the experienced team at the International Development Research Corporation – a Canadian agency that invests heavily in evidence/research-based policy change overseas – that provides simple five level framework for assessing the demand – or even resistance – to a group undertaking policy work, and the implications for research strategy and policy makers’ uptake.

Complexity: 1

Source: <https://idrc-crدي.ca/en/book/knowledge-policy-making-most-development-research>

6.1.2 Assessing the Policy Development Process

Measuring the Policy Making Process

A resource developed by Public Health Ontario to assist policy advocates to assess the effectiveness of the process they employ to develop a policy. While the title implies the focus of the resource is on measurable indicators, the content actually offers a variety of useful questions that can be asked in different stages of the development process.

Complexity: 2

Source: https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/F/2017/focus-on-policy-making.pdf?rev=b99c34a3a1574abb8245f12f22d37096&sc_lang=en

6.1.3 Evaluating Policy Options

Policy Prototyping Guide

A ‘scrappy’ resource that employs the prototyping approach to design – developing and testing early versions of an idea – to policy development. Includes several steps to mock up and then stress test a policy proposal (in this case, a legislative bill) through interviews with knowledgeable policy makers and stakeholders, using the feedback to strengthen the proposal even further.

Complexity: 2

Source: <https://letstalkprivacy.media.mit.edu/ltp-prototyping-guide.pdf>

6.2 Placement on the Policy Agenda

Once a group feels they have a solid policy option or proposal, they begin the work of placing it on the list of issues that policy makers are taking seriously. There are (at least) three areas that warrant evaluation attention in this phase.

6.2.1 Changes in Awareness & Interest

The AEI's President on Measuring the Impact of Ideas

A thought piece by the President of the American Enterprise Institute – a Washington Based Think Tank – that describes how the organization measures the impact of their ‘free enterprise’ based policy options by comparing the number and variety of occasions when policy makers have heard/invited them in to share their ideas.

Complexity: 2-3

Source: <https://hbr.org/2018/03/aeis-president-on-measuring-the-impact-of-ideas>

Bellwether Evaluation

A highly structured, sample-savvy, interview process that focuses on assessing the general interest of policy makers in a policy issue or even position.

Complexity: 1

Sources: <https://archive.globalfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/advocacy-and-policy-change/evaluating-an-issue-s-position-on-the-policy-agenda-the-bellwether-methodology>

Experienced evaluator, Joelle Cooke, shares some hot tips on using the method effectively: <https://aea365.org/blog/joelle-cook-on-the-bellwether-interview-methodology/>

6.2.2 Changes in Narrative

Measuring Narrative Change: Understanding Progress and Navigating Complexity

A complete, up-to-date and practical resource on tracking changes in narratives – a key to many systems changes and policy change initiatives – by one of the most active evaluation firms in the systems change field in the United States. It has 42 pages and two appendices with targeted resources.

Complexity: 2

Source: https://www.orsimpact.com/DirectoryAttachments/3102021_103034_594_ORSImpact_Measuring_Narrative_Change_2.0.pdf

Using Discourse Analysis to Assess Narrative Change

An article that explores how ‘discourse analysis’ can produce insights from unique methods drawn from the arts and literature, popular music, language of social protest.

Complexity: 3

Source: <https://www.evaluationinnovation.org/insight/using-discourse-analysis-to-assess-narrative-change-humanistic-methods/>

6.2.3 Changes in Will

Measuring Political Will: Lessons from Modifying the Policy Maker Rating Scales

A 27-page exploration of a technique to assess policy makers’ level of support for a particular policy proposal – their level of support, their level of influence and the advocate’s confidence in their rating – and its application, adaptation and lessons from three case studies.

Source : https://www.orsimpact.com/DirectoryAttachments/132018_85303_994_PMR-FINAL-4-5-16.pdf

Champions and Champion’ness: Measuring Effort to Create Champions for Policy Change

A 10-page brief that explores the different elements of being a ‘champion’ for a policy change and different ways to track the development and behaviours of policy champions.

Complexity: 1

Source: <https://www.evaluationinnovation.org/publication/champions-and-champion-ness-measuring-efforts-to-create-champions-for-policy-change/>

6.3 Adoption or Blocking a Policy Proposal

The ‘big push’ of many advocacy efforts it to encourage policy makers to adopt the proposal and/or block the adoption of an alternative option. There are a variety of ways to spot, understand and assess these occurrences.

6.3.1 Ripple Effect Mapping

A participatory way for stakeholders of a policy change effort to surface and track the ripple effects of their activities in a system. Employs the use of a strong facilitator, a representative stakeholder group and a series of interviews and real time mapping of activities and ripple which can then be codified and – if appropriate – further investigated to find out more.

Complexity Level: 1

Source: <https://extension.umn.edu/community-development/ripple-effect-mapping>

6.3.2 Most Significant Change

A participatory way for stakeholders to describe the changes that have emerged out of any type of initiative – a program or advocacy campaign – that have emerged in a specific domain (including changes in policy or regulation) and to provide their own assessment of the significance of those changes. Includes a very thorough 110-page guide with diverse tools and examples.

Complexity Level: 1

Source: <https://www.clearhorizonacademy.com/resources>

6.3.3 Significant Instances of Policy and Systems Improvement

A variation on MSC, a participatory way for stakeholders of a policy change effort to surface, track and describe instances of where they see improvements in systems and policies that align with their policy goals, assess the significance of those improvements, and provide a rough estimate of their possible contribution to those changes. Includes a description of the key features of a SIPSI description and ways to engage stakeholders in assessing the merit of the improvements.

Complexity Level: 1

Source: <https://www.clearhorizonacademy.com/resources>

6.3.4 Episode Studies

Episode studies refer to a case study that focuses on a clear policy change and tracks back to assess what impact research had among the variety of issues that led to the policy change. They could be focusing on a single episode or comparative episodes. It differs from other case study approaches, which usually take an initiative as the starting point and look forward.

Complexity: 2-3

Source: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/methods/episode-studies>

6.3.5 Outcome Harvesting

A six-step methodology to track and assess the cumulative ‘systems and policy changes’ and contributions of multiple change efforts over time. It is a more sophisticated, intensive version of MSC and SIPSI developed for use in international development work and now employed by well known organizations such as the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development and Oxfam.

Usefulness: when wanting to track the long-term, cumulative effect of an advocacy campaign over time.

Complexity Level: 2 - 3

Source: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/outcome-harvesting>

6.3.6 Rapid Outcome Assessment

A three-stage methodology created by the Overseas Development Institute that draws heavily on other evaluation techniques that aims to develop a broad- picture of the changes that have emerged from an advocacy campaign through a series of workshops with advocacy stakeholders and policy audiences.

Usefulness: when wanting to track the long-term, cumulative effect of an advocacy campaign over time, and set the stage for deeper investigations.

Complexity Level: 2

Source: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/methods/rapid-outcomes-assessment>

6.3.7 The “Good Defense” Guide

The *When the Best Offense is a Good Defense Guide* is one of the very few resources that systematically explores the work of blocking unwanted policy proposals. It explores the idea of ‘blocking’ and a variety of ‘defense’ scenarios. It also includes implications for evaluation and measurement and several helpful worksheets (e.g., Defence Advocacy Reflection Worksheet) to work through how a group might assess its own blocking efforts.

Complexity: 1-3

Source: https://www.orsimpact.com/DirectoryAttachments/4232020_123618_15_Defensive_Advocacy_ORI_Impact.pdf

6.4 Policy Implementation

Getting a policy adopted is one thing. Ensuring that it is implemented in a timely, effective and equitable manner is quite another. Advocates for a policy proposal must often continue their pressure on policy makers and the civil service in the all-important implementation phase.

6.4.1 Evaluating Policy Implementation Brief

A helpful 4-page brief by the Center Disease Control (CDC) that explores common issues and objectives for evaluating the implementation of policies.

Useful: a quick reference on the topic.

Complexity: 1

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/pdfs/policy/brief-4-a.pdf>

6.4.2 Beyond the Policy Win

The *Beyond the Policy Win: Pathways for Policy Implementation* resource makes a distinction between campaigns to advocate for the adoption of policies and campaigns to ensure the effective implementation of those policies. Includes three different frameworks to inform implementation advocacy, as well as questions and ideas to consider effort to measure and learn from these efforts.

Usefulness: a foundational reference resource for any effort to block an unwanted policy.

Complexity: 1 – 3

Source: https://www.orsimpact.com/DirectoryAttachments/1132017_42900_89_BEYOND_The_WIN.pdf

6.5 Policy Impact

Once a policy is implemented, a group may want to evaluate its actual – rather than hoped for – impact. Few policy advocates will have the authority, resources and expertise to carry out this task on their own – and when they do, its often in cooperation with those implementing the policy. Impact evaluation is a complex endeavour and an entire subfield of evaluation that requires time, expertise and resources to do well. Here are a few resources to get you started.

6.5.1 Evaluating Policy Impact: A Brief

A solid introduction to the general idea of evaluating policy impact by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Includes a description of how it is different from other types of evaluation and some of the basic ideas and issues involved in that work.

Complexity 1:

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/pdfs/policy/brief-5-a.pdf>

6.5.2 Better Evaluation on Impact Evaluation

A comprehensive review impact evaluation, including key issues, questions and methods, with a large number of links to different resources to assist with each phase of the process.

Complexity: 1-3

Source: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/themes/impact-evaluation>

7.0 CROSS CUTTING EVALUATION

This section explores a variety of resources that touch on evaluation resources that are useful throughout the policy development, advocacy and implementation process.

7.1 Building Capacity

Groups interested in policy change often assess their capacity to develop and advocate for policy change at the beginning, during, and at the end of an initiative.

7.1.1 Advocacy Capacity Tool

The Advocacy Capacity Tool (ACT!) is a self-assessment tool that nonprofit organizations, coalitions, and groups can use to assess their current capacity - or readiness - to engage in advocacy efforts. It explores four dimensions of capacity: advocacy goals, plans and strategies; conducting advocacy; advocacy avenues, and organizational operations to sustain advocacy. It's offered in an on-line format.

Complexity: 1

Source: <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5251306/ACT>

7.1.2 Changes in Advocates' Empowerment

Policy Wins are Not Enough

This resource is one of the few that explores ways to think about and assess how the policy development process can empower those with limited power to make change, not only in a specific policy initiative, but also over the long term, over multiple policy initiatives.

Complexity: 2

Source: <https://www.evaluationinnovation.org/publication/advocacy-that-builds-power-transforming-policies-and-systems-for-health-and-racial-equity/>

Evaluating Community Organizing

A brief that describes an approach to how to evaluate how well a group is applying community organizing principles to their grass-roots policy work. It includes a description of the elements, benchmarks and methods that might be employed in an evaluation.

Complexity: 1

Source: <https://www.evaluationinnovation.org/publication/evaluating-community-organizing/>

7.2 Real Time Learning & Adaptation

Those involved in developing and advocating for a policy change can benefit from systematic processes to spot and understand 'insights' and 'lessons' that emerge from their work in real time and use them to improve and adapt their current and future efforts.

7.2.1 After Action Reviews

The After-Action Review (AAR) is a simple method for facilitating an assessment of organizational performance by bringing together a team to discuss a task, event, activity or project in an open and honest fashion. It was developed and popularized in the US Military and then adopted and adapted into a variety of different contexts, such as public services, social change and social innovation settings.

Complexity: 1

Source: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/methods/after-action-review>

7.2.2 Intense Period Debriefs

The Intense Period Debrief (IPD) developed by the Innovation Network, responds to the intensive time constraints advocates commonly face mid-campaign by creating a very brief opportunity for advocates to pause and reflect on their campaign's progress. A debrief interview protocol is used either with a one-time focus group of advocates or in brief individual interviews to capture real time information about how the campaign is proceeding and what is happening behind the scenes in the effort. This may be especially useful after a major event or shift happens in an advocacy work.

Complexity: 1

Source: http://www.pointk.org/client_docs/File/advocacy/intense_period_debrief.pdf

7.2.3 Emergent Learning Tables

Emergent Learning Tables make it possible for people from within or across groups to come together around a shared question to ask, "What do we know so far?" about a forward-focused, action-oriented question. It then helps them structure a process of learning-by-doing, and adjusting actions, based on their experiences and findings.

Complexity: 2

Source: http://www.pointk.org/client_docs/File/advocacy/intense_period_debrief.pdf

7.2.4 Developing Lessons Learned Reports

Despite the widespread support for the idea for developing and using 'lessons learned' in change initiatives, there is little practical guidance to do so. This resource provides one way to go about it.

Complexity: 2-3

Source : <https://here2there.ca/developing-lessons-learned/>

7.2.5 Failure Report

Engineers without Borders Canada popularized the idea. The team at Fail Forward codified the process. Failure reports are a great way to normalize, document and – if things go right – to learn from things that don't work out. Even if an organization does not want to publish or share the failure and reasons for it with others, every serious social innovator should at least be able to facilitate its own review of things that don't work out.

Complexity: 1

Source: <https://failforward.org/failurereports>

7.3 Contribution to Policy Change

Whatever changes policy advocates observe in their efforts – from getting a policy proposal on the agenda, its adoption or blocking, its effective implementation and impact – they are usually just one of the factors that have contributed to that change. While some of the resources, methods and techniques in section 5 include questions and approaches for assessing advocates' influence on changes, this section includes several resources that take on that task directly.

7.3.1 Lost Causal: Debunking Myths About Causal Analysis in Philanthropy

The most up to date, thorough and accessible review of all the options that change-makers have at their disposal for getting a handle on the extent to which their activities have influenced some type of change, outcome, result or impact. It includes 17 methods organized into four different broad approaches: participatory, case-based, theory based, and systems based. While it was developed as a general resource on assessing the cause and effect of any intervention – e.g., from a program's effects on young people's reading levels to the influence of a collaborative effort to change policies – it is a valuable resource for any change-maker interested in better understanding their own efforts at policy advocacy.

Complexity: 2-3

Source: <https://www.evaluationinnovation.org/publication/lost-causal-debunking-myths-about-causal-analysis-in-philanthropy/>

7.3.2 Contribution Analysis in Policy Work: Understanding Advocacy's Influence

A thorough resource for applying the well-developed methodology of contribution analysis to policy change efforts. It includes a description of contribution analysis, a step-by-step approach, and multiple examples of its application to actual advocacy efforts.

Complexity: 3

Source:

https://www.orsimpact.com/DirectoryAttachments/8172021_94219_985_Contribution_Analysis_in_Policy_Work_2021.pdf