

## Identifying opportunities in the decision-making process to generate demand for evaluations

Following the policy calendar, nationally, regionally and internationally, provides many opportunities that can serve as opportunities and entry points to begin creating demand for evaluation. These opportunities can be used to strengthen the advocacy position, create alliances, raise awareness, and to get the advocacy message across. Mapping out possible advocacy opportunities in relation to the decision-making process will help in developing an overall advocacy strategy. These moments could be as simple as meeting with a parliamentarian, attending a conference, or connecting with celebrations around a policy success or an event such as Human Rights Day. The advocacy opportunities could be more formal, for instance, taking part in government's consultations on major policy reviews, such as the poverty reduction strategies and national plans of action, and drafting of the new constitution and alternative reports to the international monitoring agencies (such as the CRC Committee, CEDAW Committee among others). Connecting with opportunities requires time, energy and resources. Therefore the opportunity must have the potential to exert influence, bring together allies and those who can be converted to become allies, people who hold power over the issue, and also to raise the profile of the issue.<sup>1</sup>

### Declaring 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation (EvalYear)<sup>2</sup>

*Key advocacy message: Evidence for the world we want. Using evaluation to improve people's lives through better policy-making*

To push for greater recognition and use of evaluation by governments, EvalPartners has facilitated a global dialogue among regional and national evaluation actors, evaluation offices of International Organizations, including UN agencies and the World Bank's IEG, OECD/DAC and developing countries, private foundations and other key stakeholders. The dialogue has resulted in designating 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation (EvalYear) in order to advocate and promote evaluation and evidence-based policy-making at international, regional, national and local levels.

EvalYear will be a catalyst for important conversations and thinking, at international, regional, national, and sub-national level, on the role of monitoring and evaluation in good governance for equitable and sustainable human development. EvalYear will position evaluation in the policy arena, by raising awareness of the importance of embedding monitoring and evaluation systems in the development and implementation of the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals, and all other critical local contextualized goals, at the international and national levels. EvalYear is about taking mutual responsibility for policies and social action through greater understanding, transparency, and constructive dialogue.

EvalYear features **inclusion** where everyone has a role to play: civil society, governments, international partners, academia, and individuals. For example, EvalYear will help to shape opinion and influence decision-making through VOPE conferences and UN evaluation-related meetings that will keep the spotlight on policy coherence for equitable, and gender responsive sustainable development and good governance in the international and national arenas. EvalYear invites **innovation** at many levels: methods of engagement and capacity building, peer-to-peer exchanges, use of technology for communications and scale up, and involvement of new partners. EvalYear will bring together a **strategic partnership** of committed individuals and organizations around the world for coordinated action to promote evaluation as a catalytic intervention for better human development.

CSOs, VOPEs and stakeholders should use EvalYear as an opportunity and entry point to strategically advocate for equity and gender responsive national evaluation policies and systems.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted Karkara N. (2013). *The Children's Agenda Advocacy Toolkit: Guidance on how to effectively advocate for children's rights in Tanzania*, UNICEF Tanzania. Available at [http://www.unicef.org/tanzania/Childrens\\_Agenda\\_AdvocacyToolkit\\_\(2013\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/tanzania/Childrens_Agenda_AdvocacyToolkit_(2013).pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mymande.org/evalyear>

International policies, commitments and conventions are valuable tools to fuel national and local level advocacy. The advocacy processes around these can draw upon national, regional and international advocacy networks. International events and processes can be leveraged to generate demand for evaluation at the national level. For example, the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Busan in 2011, took note that effective development requires a strong focus on results, ownership and accountability, which can be supported by stronger monitoring, evaluation and communication of development results. Such international fora and their declarations can become essential national advocacy hooks to strengthen evaluative thinking in policy-making. Currently, an opportunity exists to link with the dialogue around the forthcoming Sustainable Developmental Goals and to demand greater commitment to evaluation in post 2015 programmes and national goals.

### **Choosing the best medium for message delivery**

Effective messaging relies on careful attention not only to the message itself, but also to how it is transmitted – known as the ‘medium’. It is worth considering the most effective medium to carry your message, and the most effective messenger to deliver it. The message, messenger and the medium will be determined by the audience you are trying to reach.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the many different formats or mediums for delivering a message include:

- **Person to person** (one-on-one lobbying visits, group or community meetings, conferences and workshops, public hearings, protests, public demonstrations).
- **Print** (newspapers, magazines, journals, booklets, newsletters, posters, leaflets, pamphlets, reports, studies, letters to decision-makers).
- **Electronic** (radio, television, video and film, Internet [e.g., blogs, social media websites, YouTube], mobile phone technology).

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<sup>3</sup> WaterAid. (2007). The Advocacy Sourcebook.

Here is a list of possible mediums for different audiences:

Audience	Medium
Members of Parliament, Legislators	Direct distribution of advocacy booklets, issue briefs and evaluation reports (including summary of key findings), workshops and meetings, parliamentary session briefing, sector working groups, e-mails. Directly via the media (Talk shows, press conferences). Indirectly via the media (newspapers, radio, TV, journals).
Ministries and Directors of Planning	Meetings with Minister, Directors and officials (e.g. with Secretary to the Treasury). Advocacy booklets, Issue briefs, key findings and results from evaluations.
Donor group	Directly through meetings (local and international); distribution of advocacy booklets, issue briefs, policy paper, internal updates and periodic reviews. Indirectly through the media (TV, radio, websites, international development journals)².
Civil society	Distribution of flyers, brochures explaining uses of evaluation and the need for evidence-based lobbying. Workshops.
Media	Press briefing, media workshops and meetings; stats flash; contributing to editorials and TV debates explaining issues relating the importance of evaluation; results of evaluation reports; websites; e-mail.
General public	Indirectly through the media (newspapers: features, editorials, regular columns; flyers; radio; TV; adverts). Social media. Celebration of important events: Evaluation Day, Human Rights Day.
Private sector/ investors	Policy briefs, flyers (e.g. how investing in evaluation can promote their interests). Direct meetings, workshops.

## Lobbying and negotiation

Lobbying involves direct communication with decision-makers and others who have influence over them. Lobbying is about educating and convincing them to support and advance your agenda. The primary targets of lobbying are the people with the power to influence a policy change on your issue.

Lobbying can occur either formally, through visits to and briefings of decision-makers and others, or informally, through conversations in corridors, restaurants, parking lots, golf courses, etc. as decision-makers go about their daily lives, or at events that are not directly related to your advocacy work.<sup>4</sup> Every successful lobbyist must develop an individual style that works for them in their context and in their particular circumstances. If possible, it is important to receive advice and involve those among partners with some experience in lobbying, prior to setting the meetings with politicians or officials. They may already know the target audience and can advise on the best approach.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Gosling L., Cohen D. (2007). *Participant's Manual: Advocacy Matters – Helping children change their world*, International Save the Children Alliance.

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Toma C. (2012). *Advocacy Toolkit: Guidance on how to advocate for a more enabling environment for civil society in your context*, Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness.

## Materials to prepare for lobbying and other ways to engage policy-makers:<sup>6</sup>

- **Advocacy booklet:** (See [Tool 9](#))
- **Talking points:** A summary of the main points, based on the primary message and your advocacy booklet you developed earlier.
- **Fact sheets:** A summary of key facts and relevant evidence (no longer than 2 pages).
- **Briefings:** A good way to educate policy-makers and bureaucrats on the use of evaluation is to hold periodic briefings for them or their staff. Briefings usually feature evaluation experts talking about the latest information on your policy issue and its importance.

## Some ground rules for lobbying:<sup>7</sup>

- Cultivate good long-term relations with your target decision-makers but don't confuse access with influence – and don't let good relationships stop you taking public action where necessary and if appropriate.
- Seek to find common ground where change may be possible.
- Be propositional rather than oppositional, wherever possible.
- Seek to establish yourselves as a trusted source of evidence and policy advice.
- Give credit where credit is due – failure to do so is what many decision-makers dislike most about development actors.
- Where appropriate inform targets of media and popular mobilization actions in advance, and share briefing papers before publishing them.
- Don't expect to achieve change in one meeting or letter.

**Negotiating** means advancing the issue by presenting a position and dealing with opposition by understanding and managing power dynamics within and among the institutions being influenced. Through the give and take of negotiation, groups try to agree on a solution that both sides can live with. The process involves bargaining, good communication, an understanding of the relative power and interests of all stakeholders and willingness to engage in dialogue and to compromise.<sup>8</sup>

## Tips for negotiation:<sup>9</sup>

- Hold out incentives to show that you have something of value: make sure you have something of value to them and make it obvious you do.
- Step up the pressure to demonstrate the cost of not reaching a settlement: following a risk assessment, issue a credible 'threat' (e.g. media exposure, boycott), force a choice on the other party and make consequences tangible to them.
- Establish your authority and credibility: make sure you have an explicit mandate (for example, VOPEs can show they are part of regional and global efforts to promote the use of evaluation in evidence based policy-making) and make that known to the other party.
- Enlist support and show clout: Use allies to maximize resources and respect.
- Maintain control over the process: anticipate the reactions of the other party, build support behind the scenes for your agenda using allies and raising awareness of your issue through advocacy.

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<sup>6</sup> Gosling L., Cohen D. (2007). *Participant's Manual: Advocacy Matters – Helping children change their world*, International Save the Children Alliance.

<sup>7</sup> Toma C. (2012). *Advocacy Toolkit: Guidance on how to advocate for a more enabling environment for civil society in your context*, Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness.

<sup>8</sup> VeneKlasen L., Miller V. (2002). *A New Weave of Power, People & Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation*. Just Associates. Washington, DC

<sup>9</sup> Toma C. (2012). *Advocacy Toolkit: Guidance on how to advocate for a more enabling environment for civil society in your context*, Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness.

## Engaging with the media<sup>10</sup>

The media is both a tool and the target for advocacy to build an enabling environment for evaluation. The media can:

- Play a key role in building awareness and shaping public opinion on the use of evidence in policy-making and using evaluation to promote accountability and transparency.
- Shape the nature of debates over the importance of using evaluation in policy-making;
- Generate action from policy-makers on the use of evaluation.
- Influence governments to increase demand for evaluation, both directly and through its power to influence and mobilize opinion.
- Put direct pressure on a government to use evidence in policy-making by placing it in the spotlight.

It is important that the specific role of the media in achieving advocacy objectives is clearly integrated into advocacy strategies.

There are a number of standard techniques (outlined below) for seeking media coverage. All of them will work better if CSOs and VOPEs have established good relationships with journalists. The following are general principles in working with the media:

- **Be reliable.** If you say you will call back in half an hour, then do so. If you promise an interview with the President of the VOPE, then keep the promise. A reputation for unreliability is a barrier to getting coverage. You must be trusted.
- **Be accurate.** Know your facts and do not exaggerate. You want to build and reinforce VOPE's image as an organization of integrity and accuracy.
- **Provide service.** Provide useful information and good, clear stories. Always provide materials in the working language of the media.
- **Do not lecture.** It works against a sound long-term relationship based on respect. There is always another story.

## Winning coverage

Every story needs to win a competition before the public sees, hears or reads it. It has to compete against other stories provided by organizations, companies and press departments – many newsrooms receive hundreds of press releases every day. For example there may be several journalists and editors, who believe that development or human rights stories are not real news. Therefore special attention has to be given to stories that we want the press to cover.

To win coverage, you have to give your story every possible competitive advantage. Getting the media interested in your story involves a set of strategies, including these<sup>11</sup>:

- **Make your story newsworthy:** Why is it important? Who is affected and in what way? Why is it important now? Is there new information? Is it tied to some larger event in the news? Is a decision about to be made or has it been made?  
Make your story relevant to journalists by tying-in your story to breaking news or current events such as a controversy, conflict and scandal around a particular policy; injustice or deception on a massive scale concerning a policy; something new that has happened (for example, breakthrough evidence from evaluation that can highlight the importance of sound evaluations). Show the media that your issue is

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<sup>10</sup> Adapted from Amnesty International. (1997). *Campaigning Manual*; PARIS 21. (2010). *Advocating for the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, Country-level Toolkit* and The Democracy Center (2001).

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from UNDP. (2004). *The Blue Book: A hands-on approach to advocating for the Millennium Development Goals*; And, Coalition for the International Criminal Court. (2003). *NGO Media Outreach: Using the Media as an Advocacy Tool*.

current and relates to today's news discussions and you will have a much better chance of convincing journalists that your story is newsworthy.

Identify key dates on which evaluation will take on special meaning and work on raising of the significance of that date. A well-organized calendar of events can help you and journalists determine when to focus attention on your story.

- **Make your story easy to cover:** What is the human story behind investing in evaluation? Evaluation is analytical, complex and policy-driven. It may be interesting to VOPEs and to its partners, but it has to be made interesting to the specific audience to which it is told. Give reporters the information they will easily understand. Evaluation reports, key research findings and diagnostic studies are useful information, provided they are translated for public consumption. Journalists might not understand evaluation jargon, abbreviations or complex bureaucracies. Their readers understand even less. Remember also to give reporters access to the people they will want to talk with.
- **Build relationships with reporters:** who covers the issue? Make contact when you aren't pitching a story.
- **Meeting Editorial Deadlines:** Remember to work within editorial deadlines. Deadlines vary greatly depending on the journalist and his or her medium of communications. Be sure to provide journalists sufficient "lead time" in order to prepare to publish a story in a timely manner.

## Communicating with the media

In communicating with the media, the following established techniques can be used, such as the press release; the press conference; the media briefing and information pack (press kits); interviews and comment; the 'photo opportunity'; sending letters, writing opinion-editorials, etc.. In addition, websites, newsletters, blogs, talking points and issue briefs, seminars and workshops and so on are indispensable media and broader communication tools. Which technique you use will depend partly on the strength of your story, the resources you have available and logistical issues. **For more details on how to put together press releases, press kits, media events and interviews see [Annex 1](#).**

### Getting the media to ask the evaluation focused questions

By equipping the media with relevant questions to ask policy-makers, journalists can play an important role in increasing evidence based policy-making. For example, through a press kit or a media training, the journalists could be prepared with specific evaluation focused questions to ask a government official discussing a policy initiative. For instance:

- What is the policy and how does it compare to policies of other countries?
- How do you gather evidence that the policy is working?
- How do you make sure this evidence is used to inform other policy decisions and budget allocations?

When a Government or Minister announces that their policy or programme is highly successful, journalists could ask:

- How was it evaluated?
- Who undertook this evaluation?
- In what way were the various stakeholder groups involved?
- What were the evaluation's key questions and data sources?
- How will you make sure this evidence is used when you take a related policy decision?

## Integrating social media into advocacy work

Social media tools provide a huge range of opportunities to enhance your advocacy and influencing work - from widening participation, creating conversations with people to crowdsourcing solutions or reaching decision-makers. Social media is an inexpensive tool for advocacy that can help you start a conversation on an enabling environment for evaluation, with a large number of people. One of its many advantages is that distance is largely irrelevant. The main disadvantage of the social media is that people can have limited access to it in developing countries. As with other advocacy tools, it is important to have a specific purpose and target audience in mind before embarking on social media advocacy.<sup>12</sup>

The term 'social media' itself contains a number of tools, each with distinctive characteristics. The increased use and importance of these tools has sometimes challenged the right to freedom of expression and access to information leading to a shake-up in traditional approaches to advocacy and campaigning. This has opened the way to a new form of 'digital activism'.<sup>13</sup>

The first step in utilizing social media is to create a plan. Creating a social media plan includes thinking about:<sup>14</sup>

1. **What do you want to achieve?** Is your goal narrow (publicizing an event such as the launch of the National Evaluation Policy) or broad (building and engaging with a community or coalition of evaluation professionals)?
2. **Who is the audience you would like to reach?** Are you primarily communicating with people who are already familiar with your CSO/VOPE's work, such as your members and partners? Or are you reaching out to targets and the influentials part of your larger advocacy strategy?
3. **Which social media platforms will you focus on?** This decision should be guided by your objectives and intended target audience. There are several social media platforms but it is best to use one or two platforms. Social media platforms are emerging fast, but a few current examples are as follows:<sup>15</sup>

Blogging ([www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org))  
Micro-blogging ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com))  
Video-sharing ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com))  
Photo-sharing ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)) ([www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com))  
Podcasting ([www.blogtalkradio.com](http://www.blogtalkradio.com))  
Mapping ([www.maps.google.com](http://www.maps.google.com))  
Social networking ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com))  
Professional networking ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com))  
Social voting ([www.digg.com](http://www.digg.com))  
Social bookmarking ([www.delicious.com](http://www.delicious.com))  
Lifestreaming ([www.friendfeed.com](http://www.friendfeed.com))  
Wikis ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))  
Virtual Worlds ([www.secondlife.com](http://www.secondlife.com))  
Custom social networks ([www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com))

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<sup>12</sup> Adapted from Amnesty International. (1997). *Campaigning Manual*.

<sup>13</sup> Adapted from Toma C., (2012). *Advocacy Toolkit: Guidance on how to advocate for a more enabling environment for civil society in your context*, Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness.

<sup>14</sup> Adapted from <http://www.aauw.org/resource/how-to-use-social-media-for-advocacy/>

<sup>15</sup> Adapted from Toma C., (2012). *Advocacy Toolkit: Guidance on how to advocate for a more enabling environment for civil society in your context*, Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness.

4. **Which resources and materials will you share through social media?** Those who post – or speak – on social media on behalf of your organization need to speak knowledgeably about the issues, be good storytellers and understand the best practices for the forums in which they are working. They can be trained to use talking points and data relevant to the topic at hand, but their value is in injecting subject matter expertise and analysis into the debate. Whether it's staff or a volunteer leader, a knowledgeable and empowered spokesperson carries more weight with influencers.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.avma.org/Advocacy/Tools/Pages/Who-is-your-social-media-advocacy-voice.aspx>