Managing knowledge in advocacy

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Key messages:

- **Managing knowledge secures evidence for effective evaluation advocacy, improves visibility of the organization's advocacy work, improves networking and enables internal dialogue to support the creation of external communication.**

- **CSOs and VOPEs should develop knowledge management strategies with clearly defined processes, mechanisms, roles and responsibilities. The knowledge management strategy should have clear linkages and consistency with the evaluation advocacy strategy.**

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Knowledge management can be understood as getting the right knowledge to the right people at the right time. It is a component of the organizational knowledge function, explicitly focusing on managing knowledge systems for better organizational performance and improved outcomes. Knowledge management is a management activity that seeks to enhance the organization, integration, sharing and delivery of knowledge.[1]

Strong knowledge management systems support the evaluation function and help to further national evaluation capacities. Securing and managing knowledge are also at the heart of advocacy efforts that promote an enabling environment for evaluation. Knowledge management enables CSOs, VOPEs and other stakeholders to better influence policy debates and policy processes in favour of evaluation.[2]

Collaboration and sharing of information

Collaboration on knowledge generation and access to knowledge among VOPE partners, CSOs and other stakeholders is fundamental to achieve increased commitment for evaluation. It also leads to increased networking among stakeholders. (*For more information on networking and partnerships, refer to* Section 5*).* Collaboration is also required with established knowledge management centers to facilitate sharing and accessibility of knowledge related to evaluation and its advocacy. Systematic knowledge generation and sharing helps advocacy practitioners to recognize that this practice builds their power.

The CSOs and VOPEs need to create an enabling culture and environment for staff to take time during and after major advocacy efforts to reflect on, and capture, not only successes and positive outcomes, but also failures and lessons learned. Identifying, validating and properly documenting innovations, lessons learned and good practices are a necessary part of capturing key learning during an advocacy effort *(see template ahead on documenting innovations, lessons learned and good practices).* EvalPartners has taken steps forward in this area through a mapping exercise of VOPEs that helps to identify, document, publish and share good practices.

Discussions on topics among advocacy practitioners who have relevant knowledge and experience in advocacy to further the use of evaluation, should be an essential part of such knowledge exchange. Convening round tables and conferences, webinars, organizing e-discussions, creating an online library of relevant materials for stakeholders, are also useful ways of capturing and sharing knowledge.

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[1] UNICEF. (2006). Concept Note on Knowledge Management.
[2] http://www.unicef.org/rosa/ROSA_Evaluation_Journal.pdf

CSOs and VOPEs should develop a knowledge management strategy that is linked to and supports the evaluation advocacy strategy. The development of the knowledge management strategy must be built into CSOs, VOPEs' and stakeholders annual work plans so that resources are secured. The knowledge management strategy should outline roles and responsibilities for knowledge generation and management among coalition members and within organizations. In general, sharing of knowledge, along with the sharing of resources and common objectives around knowledge management can influence and drive all phases of advocacy (planning, implementation and evaluation) and develop partners' engagement in policy debates and processes.