

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Measuring and evaluating the impact of social justice advocacy and citizen organizing strategies

One of the crucial ways of deepening our understanding of efforts to advance rights, equality and justice is by evaluating our strategies. A relatively new area of thinking and practice, evaluating advocacy and organizing involves defining what we are measuring and how to measure it. We look at evaluation as the flipside of planning — by pushing ourselves to define what is success and how we measure it, we sharpen the link between our strategies and our vision.

The *Advocacy Action and Impact Chart*¹ on page 3 can be used as a checklist both for planning and for monitoring and evaluation. The framework is shaped by the experience of long time social justice advocates around the world who found that advocacy success needs to produce change in five dimensions – government, private sector, civil society, political space and culture, and the individual.

The **government arena**, the most common arena for success in advocacy, includes changes in policies, programs, officials, elections, laws, processes, budgets, and regulations of public institutions and related international organizations such as the UN system, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund.

The second arena, the **private sector**, addresses changes in business policies, programs, and practices. It may be less familiar to some NGOs and grassroots groups, but is an important arena of action for promoting more socially responsible behavior by local and multinational corporations.

The third arena for action and impact involves fortifying **civil society**. Strengthening the authority, voice, agenda-setting, and planning capacities of NGOs and popular organizations is critical to increasing their legitimacy, sustained participation, and voice in public decisionmaking.

A fourth arena of activity and impact entails changes in **political space and culture**. These actions and outcomes help create an atmosphere in which political participation by disenfranchised groups can be effective and carried out, at a minimum, without fear of violence or repression. Possible impacts include increased governmental respect for people's right to participate in decisionmaking as well as increased transparency and accountability on the part of institutions of the State and the media. Other changes might involve shifts in the way society views women's and men's roles, accepting women as legitimate political actors.

The fifth and final arena involves changes at the **individual** level. These actions and changes refer to improvements in a person's physical living conditions such as better access to water or wages. They also include personal changes that are necessary for the development of a sense of citizenship, self-worth, and solidarity.

Drafting objectives for each of the five dimensions can guide planners to think through a comprehensive strategy for change. The following questions can help planners use the chart for developing objectives and activities and identifying areas for further research.

Government

- What needs to be changed in a law or policy to make it more effective, inclusive, and fair?
- What institutional reforms will be necessary for the law/policy to be enforced/implemented fairly and effectively?
- What are the budget implications of implementation?
- What will be needed at different levels of government to ensure accountability?
- What structural reforms are needed to promote transparency and increase people's access to justice?

Private sector

- What kind of corporate policy will help to address this issue?
- What reforms in business practice and behavior are necessary?
- Will training and monitoring be necessary to prevent the issue from recurring?
- How can dialogue and joint problem-solving among government, civil society, and the private sector address diverse interests and needs?

Civil society

- How can education and organizing teach people about government, politics, and rights?
- How can citizens and groups engage constructively and critically with decisionmakers to promote accountability?
- What types of leadership and organization can be developed that foster inclusion and represent a broad range of constituents while retaining political agility and power?
- How can the strategy promote communication, dialogue, and horizontal networks?

Political space and culture

- What can be done to expand the role of citizens' groups in the formal political process? How can governments, corporations, and civil society work together to address injustice and poverty?

- What must be changed about policy formulation or enforcement to create more transparent, accountable decisionmaking?
- What information needs to be made public and accessible? What are the roles of civil society, government, and the private sector in ensuring that people know about things that affect them?
- What types of leadership and organization will be necessary to promote inclusion and consultation in all arenas?
- What public processes and policies can promote democratic values and ensure that all sectors of society are represented in decisionmaking?

Individual

- How will citizens participate effectively in public debate and policymaking?
- What material improvement will be felt by individuals as a result of the political reform process?
- What kinds of skills, information, and experiences do citizens need to be confident and active and to internalize their rights?
- How can the public education component of the advocacy encourage people to respect differences and to address discrimination?

NOTES

¹ Developed and refined by Valerie Miller and Lisa VeneKlasen; see also V. Miller, *NGOs and Grassroots Policy Influence: What is Success?* Institute for Development Research, Vol. 11, No. 5, 1994.

Advocacy Action and Impact Chart	
ARENA	IMPACT
1. State / Government Sector	Support for or change in a law, policy, program, practices, person, decision-making process, budget, enforcement, access, etc.
<i>National</i> -Executive -Agencies / Ministries -Legislative / Parliament -Military / Police -Courts -Other <i>Provincial Government</i> <i>Local Government</i> <i>International Bodies</i> -UN -IMF / World Bank -Multilateral Development Banks <i>Other</i>	<i>Actions and in pacts that advance human rights, foster more equitable sustainable development and promote greater voice and power of excluded populations in public decision-making (e.g. women, indigenous groups, the poor, and religious, racial or ethnic minorities, etc.)</i>
2. Private Sector	Support for or change in policy, program, practices, behavior, etc.
Local / National / Multinational	<i>See actions and in pacts under State / Government sector</i>
3. Civil Society	Strengthen and expand civil society's capacity, organization, accountability, and power; expand citizens' capacities and knowledge; and increase overall social reciprocity, trust and tolerance.
-NGOs -Membership Organizations -Community-based Organizations -Ally Organizations / Coalitions -Other	<i>Actions and in pacts that fortify groups and alliances working to advance the rights and improve the living conditions of marginalized peoples to protect the health of societies and the planet overall.</i>
4. Political Space and Culture	Increase democratic space, expand participation and political legitimacy of civil society, and accountability / transparency of public institutions and media; transform norms, and customs that lead to intolerance, subordination, and exclusion.
-Political -Social / Cultural -Other	<i>Actions and in pacts that enhance the political and social dimensions of culture in ways that promote the voice and vote of the marginalized in decision-making and encourage behaviors and values of cooperation, collaboration, trust, inclusion, reciprocity, and equity.</i>
5. Individual	Improve concrete living conditions and opportunities for health, education and livelihood; promote beliefs and awareness of self as protagonist / citizen with rights and responsibilities to participate in change.
-Living Conditions / Opportunities -Attitudes / Awareness -Personal Relationships, etc.	<i>Actions and in pacts that improve the lives and expand the knowledge, political analysis / consciousness, confidence, solidarity, skills, and vision of marginalized populations and their allies; actions and in pacts that challenge discrimination / subordination in personal and family relations.</i>