

Oxfam study of MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING IN NGO ADVOCACY

Description

[Tweet](#)

Findings from Comparative Policy Advocacy MEL Review Project

by Jim Coe and Juliette Majot | February 2013. Oxfam and ODI

[Executive Summary](#) & [Full text](#) available as pdf

For organizations committed to social change, advocacy often figures as a crucial strategic element. How to assess effectiveness in advocacy is, therefore, important. The usefulness of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) in advocacy are subject to much current debate. Advocacy staff, MEL professionals, senior managers, the funding community, and stakeholders of all kinds are searching for ways to improve practices and thus their odds of success in complex and contested advocacy environments. This study considers what a selection of leading advocacy organizations are doing in practice. We set out to identify existing practice and emergent trends in advocacy-related MEL practice, to explore current challenges and innovations. The study presents perceptions of how MEL contributes to advocacy effectiveness, and reviews the resources and structures dedicated to MEL.

This inquiry was initiated, funded and managed by Oxfam America. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) served an advisory role to the core project team, which included Gabrielle Watson of Oxfam America, and consultants Juliette Majot and Jim Coe. The following organizations participated in the inquiry: ActionAid International | Amnesty International | Bread for the World | CARE, USA | Greenpeace International | ONE | Oxfam America | Oxfam Great Britain | Sierra Club•

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
PURPOSE OF PAPER	10
METHODOLOGY	11
1 HOW 'MEL' IS UNDERSTOOD AND ORGANIZED	14
BALANCING FORMAL AND INFORMAL PROCESSES	14
HOW MEL FUNCTIONS ARE STRUCTURED ACROSS ORGANIZATIONS	15
2 MEL SYSTEMS: CONTEXT, CONTINUITY & LEARNING MOMENTS	17
MEL SYSTEMS FUNCTION ACROSS INTER-LINKING LEVELS	17
IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT AND CULTURE	17
THE NARRATIVE CONTINUITY THAT RUNS THROUGH MEL SYSTEMS	18
LEARNING MOMENTS	19
3 PERCEPTIONS OF VALUE, PURPOSE & QUALITY OF MEL	21
OVERALL, A MIXED PICTURE	22
PERCEPTIONS OF VALUE AND BENEFIT DIFFER ACROSS ROLES	23
4 GATHERING, ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION	26
CONCERNS AROUND EASE OF USE	27
MOVING TOWARDS MORE CONSISTENT AND HIGHER QUALITY DATA	29
ENSURING THAT THE RIGHT PEOPLE PARTICIPATE	29
5 IMPORTANCE OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT SUPPORT	31
6 BALANCING CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION	33
7 ACCOUNTABILITIES	35
FOCUS ON ACCOUNTABILITY IS TO FUNDERS	35
BALANCING LEARNING & ACCOUNTABILITY IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE	37
8 DEFINING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSING INFLUENCE	41
HOW ORGANIZATIONS TRACK CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS CHANGE	41
CHALLENGES IN CAPTURING PROCESSES OF CHANGE	46
TRENDS TOWARDS QUANTIFYING RESULTS	47
9 DOES MEL DRIVE EFFECTIVENESS?	49
10 STRUCTURED ADVOCACY, FORMALIZED MEL	50
PRINCIPLES GUIDING GOOD PRACTICE IN MEL	56
SOME FUTURE DIRECTIONS	57
APPENDIX: SURVEY DATA	58

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. advocacy
2. ODI
3. Oxfam

Date

10/02/2026

Date Created

21/04/2013

Author

admin