



Incubation Hub

CENTRE FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Policy Advocacy Lab

2024

Outline



About the lab

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the Policy
Advocacy
Lab

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About the Policy Advocacy Lab

A Policy Lab is usually made up of a specialist team, working in a creative space, which aims to tackle complex challenges in the formulation and implementation of government policy.

Labs experiment with and propose innovative public services and policies; at the same time, they try to reform and change the way government operates.

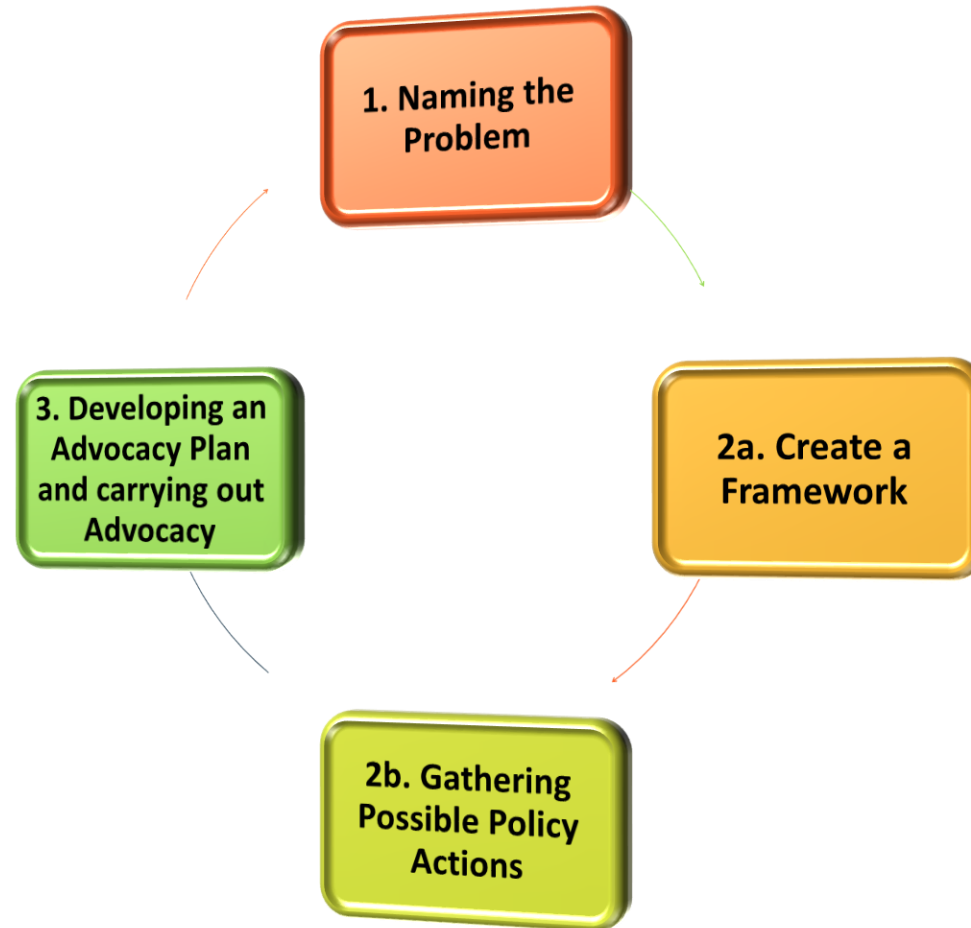
The Lab approach is designed for those who understand how policy works and have some level of familiarity with advocacy.

The lab uses new technologies and methodologies to identify data driven interventions.

It is mostly practical just as the other Lab used in Natural Sciences.


The goal of the Lab is to address the lack of citizen engagement in public policy spaces and engaging with communities on problems affecting them.


Key Steps for the Policy Advocacy Lab





1. Naming the Problem


- The name given to a public problem determines the ways in which it is resolved.
- Some questions to ask and guide as you name a problem are:

 What is the Problem?





 How are you affected by the problem?

 What is the History of the Problem?

 Who is affected by the Problem (stakeholder mapping)?

 What has been done about the problem?

1a. What is the Problem

-  This is an iterative stage where participants are challenged to confirm if what they have called a problem could be the symptom of the problem.
-  In some instances, experts narrowly define the problem due to their experiences/training.
-  A problem may also be defined narrowly to leave out the real causes.
-  In this exercise, lab participants will be equipped with tools to engage their respective communities on 'what is the problem?'. Once different names of the problem have been identified, a brainstorm will be held to describe the problem in one paragraph and then in one sentence.

Guidelines to Naming a Problem

The questions that the participants ask should be empowering so that communities do not see themselves as spectators but also as participants within policy spaces.

Lab participants should ensure that they are facilitating a discussion of people who are directly affected or have knowledge about the problems.

They should explore and agree on the technology tools that work best to do the naming process for example – WhatsApp Group, Google Sheets.

Once this is done, participants come back into the Lab to discuss the experiences of naming the problem and the different names given to a problem.

Agree on the appropriate name for the problem.

1.2 How are you Affected by the Problem

Naming a problem in terms meaningful to citizens is not simply describing it in everyday language.

Listen to what they say when they describe how an issue affects them or their family or when they talk about what is most important or what concerns them

The names that people give problems reflect concerns that are valuable to almost everyone.

We all want to be free from danger, secure from economic privation, free to pursue our own interests, and treated fairly by others—to mention a few of our basic motives.

These imperatives are more fundamental than the interests that grow out of our circumstances (which may change).

1.3 What is the History of Problem?

Public problems have a longer history and deep-seated causes that may have already been documented by others.

At this stage the lab participants will spend more time learning about the history of the problem in terms of

- (i) origins of the problem (for instance when did monetary inconsistencies start),
- (ii) previous attempts at resolving the problem (what has been done),
- (iii) what has been learnt to date about this problem

What is the History of the Problem ctd...

As individuals or as a team, there is a need to search for literature and assemble studies that have been carried out.

Participants should use reliable and peer-reviewed sources to source for literature.

There will be a need for the Lab Participants to engage affected communities using the literature from the research to validate findings especially lessons learnt and to evaluate the impact of the existing measures

1.4 Who is Affected by the Problem? – Mapping Stakeholders

- There is a need to always make sure that all stakeholders affected by a public problem are engaged.
- Practically this may be difficult to achieve given resource limitations and information asymmetries.
- Whichever method of engagement that lab participants decide to use, they should be conscious of the people they are leaving behind.
- The most effective way is to create categories of stakeholders and the different ways in which they are affected by a problem.

Who is Affected by the Problem? – Concerns Gathering

- The concerns gathered from the stakeholder mapping process will need to be grouped into three or four clusters.
- The clusters are normally grouped into four;
 - (i) set of concerns that can be resolved at the household level,
 - (ii) set of concerns that will need the intervention of others, i.e. the community;
 - (iii) set of concerns that will require the intervention of a governing authority (local or central authority), and
 - (iv) set of concerns that no one can do anything about (for e.g. if only the rains could come on time).

1.5 What has been done about the problem

- In many instances, policy making is not a zero-sum game.
- There are usually several existing measures in place to resolve the problem.
- There will be a need to carry out an impact assessment of existing measures.
- Participants will need to refresh themselves on tools for assessing policy, such as Cost Benefit Analysis, Public Policy Gap Analysis, the inclusiveness test, the sensibility analysis etc.
- In addition to this, participants will also look at power and influence with regard to the development and implementation of the existing measures.
- Beyond the policy making process lab participants need also to map the existing advocacy initiatives on the issue.

Existing Policy Measures Analysis Framework

Framework of Analysis

Problem	Existing Policy Provisions	Resources / Assets Already Allocated	Opportunities	Actor Analysis	Existing Advocacy Initiatives	Possible Advocacy Initiatives

Learning from the Region

- In many instances, we do not realize how interconnected we are with other countries.
- Many have probably gone through similar problems and may have already successfully resolved them or are in the middle of attempts to resolve them.
- For instance, countries in the sub-region share common experiences around cotton production, poverty, climate change, de-industrialization, growing inequality etc.

Learning From the Region

An Approach

- Lab participants can carry out a desktop-based study on what is happening within the region and efforts being carried out by the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) or African Union (AU) to resolve the problem that they are focusing on.
- Additionally, they can also discuss other countries that have had similar problems but are not necessarily within the region.

2a. Framing Options and Actions

- At this stage we have given a name (we can relate with) to the problem after consultations with affected communities,
- we now know who is affected and who is benefitting from the problem and,
- have data on the origins of the problem and how others are dealing with it.
- We now need to create alternative ways of resolving the problem through framing of solutions

2a. Framing Options and Actions

- Some questions to ask and guide as you name a problem are:



How are you implicated by the problem?



What should be done about it?

2a. Framing Options and Actions

- Citizens try to get all their options on the table so they can consider the advantages and disadvantages.
- Tensions among different options become apparent: if we do “x,” we can’t do “y.”
- These conversations create a framework for addressing the problem.
- A “framing” collects and presents options for acting on a problem and highlights the tensions within and among various options.
- A framework collects the actions that need to be considered in dealing with a problem and identifies adverse consequences.

Expected Results

We anticipate that at the end of the process the participants will be able to do the following:

(i) undertake coherent and comprehensive policy analysis and commentary,

(ii) manage a policy advocacy campaign from inception to completion and

(iii) train others on policy analysis and advocacy.

2b Gathering Possible Policy Actions

- At this stage, we have to determine what should be done by folk in the community, local government, and central government.
- Lab participants will have to go back to the communities and hold small meetings or use technology
- Asking everyday questions like “If you are that concerned, what do you think should be done?”
- These questions usually open the door to identifying actions.
- Typically, the actions are implicit in the concerns.
- However, This is only true if the question focuses on a discrete problem that requires a decision.

Cont...

- Asking people about a broad topic like health or education will generate a long list of concerns that do not lend itself to decision making/action
- If the topic is health, one person may complain about the complexities of the system, another medical errors in hospitals, and still another about the lack of insurance for pre-existing conditions
- The actions that would follow from these varied concerns would not result in options for dealing with one specific problem
- They are responsive to several problems
- We need to make sure that we have clarified the problem before proceeding to framing solutions
- Lab participants will bring the different options back into the lab
- They will spend time grouping the suggestions into common themes on what needs to be done.
- Participants should create two big groups/clusters
 - I. will need policy to be achieved
 - II. will need communities on their own
- For the work in the lab, we will only focus on those suggestions that require policy
- There is still a need to further distill these into specific policy action clusters
- The group will then choose either to focus on one set of recommended policy actions or sub-divide themselves into groups for the next task

3: Developing an Advocacy Plan and Carrying Out Advocacy

3.1 Set goals and objectives

- This stage is central to ensuring the development and carrying out of successful Advocacy Actions
- With the information collected during processes 1 – 2, participants must properly plan for advocacy to avoid incidences that will make them look ineffective, uncoordinated, or clumsy to increase their chances of success

Expected Outcomes

Participants will decide on the end outcome they hope to achieve with their advocacy

(i) A new policy?

(ii) Change/revise an existing policy ?

(iii) More resources channelled towards an existing policy to ensure that it is effectively implemented?

Participants will work together in communities to develop the strategy and tactics they must use to allow them to reach their overall goal.

Set goals and objectives continuation

Setting goals and objectives

- This planning and setting of goals and objectives are required because policy advocacy often involves getting powerful individuals or organizations to make big changes that may not be in their short-term interest and working in the public eye
- During this process, participants will also start to identify the different advocacy actions they will need to undertake to achieve their goal, when and how they will do them, the resources/assets they will need or already have (e.g., money, facilities, skills, and allies), and how they will be used

The Approach

- Lab participants will take part in a second masterclass session focusing on the different ways of carrying out advocacy actions and skills development
- This is the stage where they will learn about setting SMART goals for the advocacy, writing compelling policy briefs and other relevant campaign materials

Approach continuation

- will have to go back to the communities and hold small meetings or use technology and work with communities to identify what they want to see change if the actions identified in the earlier process are implemented
- and will work with communities to come up with goals and objectives of their advocacy actions and what actions to be done to achieve those goals and objectives. In the process and using an asset-based approach they will identify the resources/assets at hand that can be used then to undertake the policy actions.

3.2 Carrying out Advocacy Actions

This process is the consolidation and outworking of all the processes carried out from stage 1

Advocacy is multi-faceted it involves identifying and agreeing on who to collaborate with (stakeholder mapping)

identifying the persons or institutions that will need to carry or influence out the policy reforms (power mapping)

and assessment of what those intending to carry out advocacy already have (asset mapping)

Successful advocacy depends on collecting and curating compelling evidence which should be presented in brief and succinct reports (such as policy briefs, media briefings).

In their small groups Lab Participants will carry out the following

- Stakeholder mapping
- Power making
- Asset mapping

The Lab participants will have to choose the most effective methods of delivering the message (policy).

Once the information has been adequately organized the group will prepare or implement the relevant advocacy tool/s e.g., Policy Briefs, one-pager policy asks, opinion pieces, petitions, public litigation strategies, public meetings, engagement with relevant ministers, etc.

- The group will have to develop a calendar of events and media to popularize the issue and the proposed solution

Expected Outcomes

We anticipate that at the end of the process the participants will be able to do the following:

- I. undertake coherent and comprehensive policy analysis and commentary,
- II. manage a policy advocacy campaign from inception to completion and
- III. train others on policy analysis and advocacy.

Thank you