Data advocacy with conflict-affected communities

A tool for I/NGOs to include local perspectives in the policy making process

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version 1.1.

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About the tool
For this tool, The Broker spoke with both PAX and Cordaid on multiple occasions, accompanied by interviews with senior advocacy practitioners from other organizations (including Life & Peace Institute, Norwegian Refugee Council, PeaceDirect, Center for Conflict Resolution and Kvinna till Kvinna). Insights for the tip sheets were also collected during a workshop at which The Broker facilitated an exchange between policymakers and practitioners on data and evidence-based advocacy in conflict-affected settings.

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Introduction

I/NGOs are increasingly using localization as a framework to advocate for human security and community-responsive rule of law in conflict-affected settings. The underlying assumption is that people and organizations in these communities know best what challenges they face and the solutions that should be adopted. As the digital revolution continues globally, data advocacy provides small and medium-sized I/NGOs with a unique opportunity to directly connect local perspectives of conflict-affected communities with policy processes that directly affect them at local, national and international levels.

To support such processes, the Dutch INGO Cordaid is implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Barometer — a bottom-up instrument that measures the daily peace and security needs and perspectives of local women in conflict-affected settings and gives them tools to use this data to do lobby and advocacy. Localization also inspires PAX, another Dutch INGO, to conduct the Human Security Survey — a research methodology that includes population-based research, community engagement and advocacy in South Sudan and Iraq.

Starting with the lessons from these two initiatives, this tool is designed for small to medium-size I/NGOs, like PAX and Cordaid, that aim to effectively connect locally collected data to policy discussions in order to improve human security in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Based on a quick-scan of the literature, interviews with practitioners and a validation workshop with policymakers and advocacy experts, this tool is designed to help I/NGOs work more effectively on data advocacy together with their local partners.

What is data advocacy?

Advocacy is understood as a two-sided and complementary activity. It consists of a range of activities that individuals or organizations undertake on behalf of someone or an issue. It is about getting a message across to a strategic actor in order to influence a decision. In other words, the advocate speaks on behalf of someone or an issue in order to influence a policy outcome. Data refers to systematically collected information, gathered in a methodical way, the goal of which is to provide credible information to facilitate decision-making and policy design or adaptation. I/NGOs are able to provide this type of information, even though they are not academic research institutes. Taking a methodical approach should, therefore, be viewed in a broad sense and may include (a combination of) interviews, surveys, action research, and other methods of systematic data collection. Hence, data advocacy with conflict-affected communities is a form of lobbying that takes an evidence-based approach to bringing insights from local contexts – seen through the eyes of local communities — to the policymaking process.

Theory of change and assumptions of data advocacy

To understand the specific role of data advocacy, it is important to understand a theoretical division in advocacy interventions: value-led and evidence-led advocacy. When organizations use a value-led approach, they take a certain set of values as the core argument for envisioned policy change. When organizations use an evidence-led approach, they use data as a base to frame and support their desired policy objectives. However, an advocacy initiative can be both value-led and evidence-led.

Theories of change for evidence-led advocacy and the role of data	
Policy window theory of change assumes that a given policy changes when a momentary window of opportunity opens. It focuses on three 'streams' related to the policy system (problems, policies and politics).	In all three streams, it is the role of the advocate to monitor for these windows, and to act quickly and present relevant data to inform decision making when one opens. Data can thus help to define the problem, provide solutions and influence politics (popular opinion).
Coalition theory of change assumes that change happens through coordinated activity among individuals and organizations outside of government with the same core policy beliefs.	According to this theory, the role of the advocate is to collect relevant data that represents the perspectives of a coalition (advocating for conflict-affected communities), making these broadly available, and seeing how insights from the data can help build alliances to engage policymakers.
Grassroots theory of change assumes that people can create the power to achieve social change by taking mutual action. It believes that power is not only in the hands of the elite, but changeable and dynamic.	The role of the advocate here is to strengthen the capacity of affected communities to speak for themselves and bring them to the decision-making table. Communities should be supported to take charge of data collection, analysis and data advocacy work. Data thus supports the affected communities to claim a position at the decision-making table.

These theories of change are not mutually exclusive – depending on the context, organizations may use one or more approaches. For a more detailed description of these and the seven other theories of change underlying advocacy interventions, see the outline matrix of theories by the Center for Evaluation Innovation.

When taking an evidence-led approach, it is crucial to reflect on how this impacts on the theory of change underpinning your advocacy activity. Every advocacy activity is implicitly or explicitly informed by a theory of change — a set of beliefs and assumptions about how change happens. These define the strategy of an activity and shape expectations around how and when lobbying and advocacy will be effective. The Centre for Evaluation Innovation outlines 10 dominant theories that inform advocacy and policy change efforts. While all 10 theories are worth considering, 3 examples are highlighted in the box to show their relevance to data advocacy.

Data advocacy with conflict-affected communities: six tip sheets

The advocacy cycle can be divided into six steps (see Figure 1), for which this tool has developed six tip sheets. Even though advocacy does not necessarily take a linear approach, dividing it into six phases helps us to take a step back to see where our (data) advocacy work may be improved. In some cases, a step could be focused on less or even skipped, while in other contexts extra steps will be required. The cycle assumes that functioning, formal institutions are where policy is made, but this is not necessarily the case in fragile and conflict-affected settings. In these settings, it may be necessary to not only advocate for change but also to help build government capacity to implement it. The tip sheets are designed to help you find a best-fit approach to be as successful as possible in the context in which you operate. Each tip sheet outlines specific issues you may encounter, and strategies to deal with them.

Each tip sheet outlines specific issues, bottlenecks and strategies for each part of the advocacy cycle to inform data advocacy. It builds on the structure of Conciliation Resources' Advocacy Capacity Building toolkit, expanded with information from other toolkits, literature, and the interviews and workshop done for this project.

However, one universal rule for data advocacy is applicable: always prioritize the safety of your staff and local communities over any advocacy goals you may have. In this context it is important to reflect on who owns the data that is collected, and how it is stored and shared. Moreover, since the context in conflict-affected countries can change within a few hours it is important to keep checking in with participants. Something that was not harmful one day can be extremely sensitive the next day.

Figure 1. The advocacy cycle (Adapted from: Conciliation Resources 2011)

Determining the feasibility of achieving policy change

A good understanding of the context in which you implement your data advocacy activities will help you be more effective. Start by reflecting on internal and external factors that strengthen or limit your ability to reach your advocacy goals. Internal factors are your organization's qualities and capacities (like your ability to credibly communicate a certain message, or your relationships with policymakers). External factors are about understanding the political and institutional landscape in which you work. This may include dominant cultural values, but also public opinion and the political constraints under which a policymaker operates.

Application to data advocacy

When working with locally collected data to influence policy processes it is critical to understand what kind of data has the potential to lead to change. On the one hand, this is about understanding where knowledge gaps exist: how aware are policymakers of local perspectives on certain issues? On the other hand, it is about what information a policymaker needs to lobby for change within his or her organization and in what format (stories, quantitative data, etc.): how can access to this data help policymakers advance an issue? In fragile and conflict-affected settings access to trustworthy data is often a challenge for policymakers, due to the lack of security and limited capacity of government institutions. If you understand how you can provide added value with on-the-ground data, you have a major opportunity to advocate for the needs of communities and a major source of credibility for your organization.

Useful tools

SWOT analysis

Conduct a SWOT analysis to understand your internal **s**trengths and **w**eaknesses (capacity) and identify external **o**pportunities and **t**hreats that may influence your ability to effectively connect data to the policy making process.

Assessing the situation

Common challenges

A common challenge faced is the lack of transparency of policymakers: to an outsider it is not always clear what data and evidence inform policies. Often, there is no way around this. To develop a clear strategy for dealing with this lack of transparency it is helpful to differentiate between claimed spaces and invited spaces. Invited spaces are the domain of policymakers, where you play by their rules and according to their limitations. Strategies for operating there include finding a like-minded policymaker to help you identify what data has the potential to drive change (knowledge gap), or allying with research organizations already involved in the policy process. You can also 'claim' a space by coming together with other actors to define your own policy agenda and articulate it to policy actors. You can build on your role as an 'intermediary' here. By connecting (the perspectives of) local communities with policymakers you can demonstrate the added value of the data while strengthening your legitimacy as a facilitator - and the legitimacy of local communities as providers - of policy-relevant insights.

Key aspects for data-advocacy

- Assess your capacity and credibility to use local data to influence policy making on multiple levels (local, regional, national and global).
- Reflect on external opportunities and constraints in the political landscape.
- Identify the existing knowledge gaps in the policy making process and determine how data will add value.
- Anticipate a lack of transparency about the role of evidence in the policy making process and develop a strategy to deal with this.

Checklist for data advocacy

- ☑ Do you know what your strengths and weaknesses are as an advocate?
- ☑ Do you have exclusive access to data (on communities) that policymakers are unable to access?
- ☑ Do you understand the external opportunities and constraints around your envisioned policy change?
- ☑ Do you know what evidence policies are based on and what value data can add to address the knowledge needs of policymakers?
- ☑ Can you partner with like-minded individuals in target institutions to understand the knowledge demand by key policymakers?

Formulating the specific outcomes that you want to achieve and who you want to target

After assessing the feasibility of your policy change objective, it is crucial to set realistic goals and prioritize the solutions you will promote on the basis of data. Use the 'Problem tree' and 'Objective tree' tools to help map root causes and prioritize solutions. Determine at what level policy change should take place (local, national, global) and which actors need to change. Sometimes a combination of levels is required. It is helpful to understand at which phase of the policymaking cycle your solution will be the most effective. Do you need to set the agenda? Will you contribute to policy development, improve policy implementation, or monitor and evaluate the effects of existing policies? Reflect on the role that evidence plays in each of these phases. Define short- and long-term SMART objectives.

Application to data advocacy

Data may highlight the importance of a topic, help reflect on the assumptions underlying a policy, bring in expert knowledge with practical and realistic options for policy change, or monitor and evaluate whether or not a policy is effective. Understanding and anticipating evidence gaps in the policy making process contributes to your effectiveness (see Tip sheet 1). You may not always be able to support your desired policy change with sufficient data, especially in conflict-affected settings, where access to data and communities is often limited. If this is the case, one of your goals can be to strengthen the capacity of your local partners to collect the data needed. To ensure that your activities are locally grounded, consider 'localizing' as much of the process as possible. Beyond collection, local partners (and communities) can also set research goals and analyse data, while the INGO focuses on acting as an intermediary with policymakers and policy processes. Reflect on whether community members co-own what information is collected and communicated on their behalf.

Useful tools

Problem tree and Objective tree

Use these tools to help you understand the root causes underlying the issue you are advocating for. Asking the 'why' question helps you to identify and reflect on the 'so what' question, which helps you to determine what goals to prioritize and what role data can play.

SMART analysis

Define both the long- and short-term goals and objectives of your advocacy and which policy actor should change (target). Make your policy objectives **s**imple, **m**easurable, **a**ctionable, **r**ealistic and **t**ime-bound (SMART).

Establishing goals

Common challenges

When your objectives require you to collect new data you should consider which stakeholders (e.g. communities, policymakers, and local authorities) to involve in developing research goals to ensure relevance. Such involvement promotes the 'uptake' and acceptance of conclusions based on data. Involving local partners and communities is also crucial for gaining the trust of local people in the data advocacy process. However, involving policymakers and local authorities risks the research process being co-opted, as they may be part of the problem, or have different priorities from communities (see Tip sheet 3). If you involve these actors you should look for ways to create a level playing field, keeping safety in mind, for instance, by creating a space in which communities can reflect on the research results before they are disseminated.

Key aspects for data-advocacy

- Clarify which issue to address, its root causes and consequences, and how it should be tackled. Clarify how data will be used to inform realistic policy goals addressing the identified problem.
- Determine at which level you aim to operate and which actors need to change.
- Be aware that using data to influence the policy process can take four forms: agenda setting, contributing to policy formulation, aiding policy implementation, and monitoring and evaluating the effects of existing policy.
- Strengthen the capacity of your local partners to collect and analyse missing data in conflict-affected settings in order to fill knowledge gaps in the policy making process.
- Reflect on how local communities can take ownership of the data advocacy process, including who owns the data that is being collected.

Checklist for data advocacy

- ☑ Have you prioritized your goals based on how realistic possible solutions are?
- ☑ Have you jointly determined the priority of your objectives with the communities advocated for?
- ☑ Do you understand the risks and advantages of involving policymakers and other stakeholders in the formulation of your objectives?
- ☑ Do you know which part of the policy cycle the data will target: agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, or monitoring and evaluation?
- ☑ Have you formulated SMART policy change objectives?

Determining how you will achieve your policy goals and anticipating the interests of relevant stakeholders

After defining your goals and determining which actors need to change in order to implement your desired policy change, you will need to understand the power relations around your policy objective. As various stakeholders are interested in or will be affected by your envisioned policy change, it is crucial to understand their interests and capacity (or power) to support or oppose your policy goals. This will help you to develop a suitable influencing strategy. You can use the 'Powercube' or the 'Stakeholder influence mapping tool' on the right side of this tip sheet.

Application to data advocacy

To effectively bring in relevant data it is crucial to identify the main reasons why your target policymaker, institution or organization is not yet convinced of your policy goals. Are they unfamiliar with the problem you identified? Has the change you seek not been formulated in clear and realistic policy options? Are opponents to this change more powerful? Or are there other priorities on the political agenda? Find out who your allies are and if strengthening their position can help your cause, especially when operating in conflict-affected settings where your target audience may face various institutional challenges like insufficient budgets or capacity to implement certain policies. The key is to understand the role data can (and cannot) play in your advocacy efforts.

Useful tools

Powercube

The Powercube helps you to understand the various ways in which power is distributed in the political landscape and how you can strategically engage with the right actors to realize your policy objective.

Stakeholder influence mapping

Use the stakeholder influence mapping tool to identify, categorize and understand the relevant stakeholders and their influence on decision-making.

Common challenges

Operating from a position of empathy will help you strategically advocate with relevant data. It can also strengthen your relationship with targeted policymakers and build your credibility as an actor that can provide relevant information for the policy making process. However, when taking the needs and interests of policymakers into account it is important to reflect on how this may jeopardize the needs (or safety) of your constituents in conflict-affected communities. If you decide to support the position of a powerful actor, consider carefully what the broader impact of their strengthened position will be.

Key aspects for data-advocacy

- Identify relevant stakeholders (audience, influencers, allies and opponents), their interests and their ability to realize or block your desired policy change.
- Identify the main reasons why policymakers are not convinced of your policy objective and reflect on how data can make a difference.
- Find common interests with your allies in targeted institutions and see if data can be used as a tool to realize your policy objectives by supporting their internal position.

Checklist for data advocacy

- ☑ Do you know which stakeholders have the ability to realize your policy objective?
- ☑ Do you know the relevant stakeholders on this issue and why they may support or block the policy change you seek?
- ☑ Do you know why stakeholders are not yet convinced of your objective, and if a lack of data is at the core of this?
- ☑ Have you identified allies that share your objectives?
- ☑ Have you identified policymakers that can use the data to meet your (shared) objectives?
- ☑ Do you understand the risks of strengthening certain stakeholders through data advocacy?

Formulating SMART objectives for your advocacy and detailing how you will use your resources and energy to reach them

Knowing your advocacy objectives and the people and organizations that you need to target, it is time to plan your approach in more detail. To make efficient use of your means and resources, your activity planning should be SMART (**s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**ealistic and **t**ime-bound). If you have developed a theory of change for your advocacy, you can start by reflecting on it and the role data plays in bringing about policy change to develop your objectives. If you have not, you can use the 'Advocacy strategy framework' to get a sense of your assumptions about how change works. Clarifying this will help you focus your activities and best make use of your resources. The impact ladder tool can help you define intermediate goals for your activities. Make sure to take the specifics of your context, strengths (see Tip sheet 1) and stakeholder analysis (see Tip sheet 3) into account.

Application to data advocacy

In planning, you will need to make decisions on some fundamental trade-offs for your (data) advocacy. If you are part of a relatively small I/NGO you may be faced with limited resources compared to the research capacities of governments or international organizations. The time you have to invest in competing with these capacities may put pressure on resourcing other valuable activities. In this case, forming alliances can be an effective way to build on the capacities, established networks and credibility you have collectively. An INGO consulted in the development of this tool chose to ally with a UN office to produce a monthly report, rather than compete with a 37-strong government research team. The key is to reflect on your relative advantages and added value. For an INGO this may be as an intermediary, helping to link local organizations and communities to policymakers at multiple levels, while local staff, organizations or community members may be best placed to engage local policymakers.

Useful tools

Advocacy strategy framework

Use this resource to help you think about your assumptions (theory of change) about how change comes about and adjust your advocacy activity to the target audience (public, influencers, decision makers) and the change that you seek (awareness, will, action).

Impact ladder

Use this tool to reflect on how your planned actions and activities will help you to reach your SMART goals by clarifying intermediate steps: baseline, activities, outputs, outcomes and how they link to your overall objectives.

Planning your activity

Common challenges

When allying with stakeholders (e.g. communities, policymakers and organizations), it is important to think about how your perspective may be biased. Awareness is the beginning of overcoming these biases – and choices in the allocation of your resources can help you counteract them. You can make an explicit choice for diversity within your team and partner selection criteria (e.g. ensuring ethnic, religious, cultural and gender representation). You can translate key parts of the research in order to prevent the dominance of English in the gathering, analysis and dissemination of the data. You can let external partners critically reflect on the data gathering process, research outcomes and policy advice.

Key aspects for data-advocacy

- Reflect on the assumptions underlying your approach (theory of change) to clarify how data will contribute to the policy objective.
- Formulate SMART objectives for your advocacy activities and define intermediate goals.
- Build coalitions with like-minded organizations and strengthen the capacity of local partners to engage in data advocacy.
- Develop a strategy to prevent bias in selecting local partners and communities that you collaborate with.

Checklist for data advocacy

- ☑ Are you aware of the assumptions (theory of change) underlying your advocacy process, especially how data leads to policy change?
- ☑ Is your activity planning SMART?
- ☑ Is your advocacy team made up of people with good relationships with policymakers and a good understanding of the local political and cultural context?
- ☑ Can you cooperate with like-minded stakeholders with more credibility as producers of evidence for policy or better access to policymakers?
- ☑ Are you aware of your added value and relative strengths compared to potential allies?
- ☑ Is your advocacy team/alliance sufficiently diverse to provide a good fit with the local (cultural) context, while guarding against biases in your data advocacy?
- ☑ Do you plan to involve local communities to check for possible biases in the data and your advocacy process?

Implementing your advocacy strategy and tracking whether or not your objectives are met

Starting your advocacy journey with an overview of activities and their expected results will help you to track whether or not you are on track to meet your objectives. The tools listed on the right can help facilitate this. However, methodically creating an overview does not mean that your advocacy strategy should be carved in stone. To the contrary, it should be flexible, and monitoring your impacts helps to manage this. Having a clear monitoring mechanism throughout the advocacy process will let you know if your objectives are (or are not) being met and if your strategy needs adjustment.

Application to data advocacy

To establish a proper baseline to track your impacts, you can start with the insights gained by applying tip sheets 1 — 4. Key aspects are to know where exactly change needs to happen, what the initial positions of key stakeholders are, and what data and research is already available on the issue identified. You can use this information to monitor how stakeholders engage with this issue (e.g. statements in public fora), what resources they refer to, and if that includes your publications or data. You can then track if your efforts are having an impact on indicators you have identified. This enables you to become aware of key allies and momentum around your objective. It will help you to effectively use policy windows — like a major crisis, or the publication of an international report – to generate attention for your position. Monitoring will also help you adjust your message based on current knowledge, for instance, by periodically updating data according to emerging needs for evidence.

Useful tools

Gantt chart

Use the Gantt chart to create an outline of your advocacy plan and the time frame for each advocacy activity. Add milestones to track your progress (see tool below).

Outcomes and performance indicators for advocacy programmes

Use this framework to define how you will measure your success (indicators) and develop an outcome sequence chart to set intermediate outcomes (milestones).

Common challenges

You may face two common challenges in this phase: 1) policymakers are not interested in the data and base their decisions on political considerations, or 2) policymakers are interested in the data, but cannot act on it immediately. In these situations, it is important to keep in mind that the communication of the data is not the end-point of your advocacy. Rather, it is part of a long process of policy engagement in which you are building relationships and establishing credibility. Data advocacy can aid this process. Firstly, reflect on which staff member is the right person to approach policymakers with the data. Secondly, see this as an opportunity to build your credibility as a serious knowledge partner, as you explain the added value of the data as well as its limitations. Policymakers generally appreciate transparency about the basis of your recommendations. Remain consistent in communicating its added value, your position, values and objectives to help build a strong relationship. Use tip sheets 1 and 3 to better understand the policymaker's perspective as you build relationships.

Key aspects for data-advocacy

- Use tip sheets 1–4 to establish a baseline to track the incremental effects of your data advocacy. Monitoring will help you to be flexible in an effective way.
- Use a Gantt chart (see Useful tools) to define a clear timeline for your advocacy activities and clearly divide tasks in order to track the success of your data advocacy.
- Use monitoring to become aware of emerging momentum, key allies and policy windows. Update your data according to emerging knowledge needs.
- Reflect on who is the right person to present the data in your context.
- Use data advocacy to build relationships with policymakers and be transparent about your objectives, the added value and limitations of the data.

Checklist for data advocacy

- ☑ Did you define a baseline to track the progress made towards policy change?
- ☑ Do you have a clear outline of your planned activities and expected results, which can be updated after each engagement with policymakers?
- ☑ Do you log when your publications are named or referenced by policymakers and other actors?
- ☑ Do you have a strategy to monitor emerging momentum and policy windows?
- ☑ Do you know who in your team is best placed to communicate the data to policymakers?
- ☑ Do you have a strategy to build credibility and trust among policymakers on the basis of your data advocacy?

Critically evaluating your effectiveness and identifying lessons learnt for future interventions

To help you understand the extent to which your SMART objectives have been met, whether your theory of change needs improvement, and where to improve your data advocacy process in the future, evaluation of your advocacy work is needed. If you have a theory of change for your activity you can start there by looking back towards the chain of events around policy changes and their connection to your activities. To define criteria for your evaluation, you can use tip sheets 1—5. This means that you should ask yourself whether your collected data and conducted advocacy efforts were: relevant (tip sheet 1), goal-oriented (tip sheet 2), well-targeted (tip sheet 3), efficient (tip sheet 4) and responsive (tip sheet 5).

Application to data advocacy

Beyond obtaining an idea of the effectiveness of your own work, there are two types of constituents to which you should demonstrate your impact: your donor and the communities that you represent in the advocacy work. For a donor, more technical aspects tied to the monitoring and evaluation of your programme are key to determine whether or not budgets were spent appropriately. Often quantifiable results are important, and evaluation is done by an external evaluator. The qualitative and normative dimensions of your data advocacy (how the data used in your advocacy efforts contributed to the policy change) is important to both, but your primary constituent should be the group that is represented. You should be able to demonstrate to them to what extent their voice was heard, and how this improved their situation. Was the trust they placed in your organization by sharing their perspective warranted? Survey-tiredness is a common problem in communities, when they provide information to INGOs, but never receive information on what was done with their data. Consider if the 'Principles for Digital Development' were applied, in particular on designing with users, and on privacy and security. Use this reflection with communities to plan future advocacy efforts.

Useful tools

Interim outcome and example indicators

Use this tool to gain an overview of relevant interim outcomes for the advocacy process and provide examples and indicators to evaluate them.

Rapid outcome assessment

Use this tool to assess and map the impact of your advocacy intervention on a particular change in policy or the policy environment.

Outcome harvesting

In complex situations, this method enables you to reflect on the extent to which your advocacy efforts contributed to the observed policy outcome.

Common challenges

Due to the nonlinear nature of policy making and the fact that many actors are involved in the process, it is often difficult to determine exactly how your advocacy efforts and data contributed to policy change. Some simple, low-cost ways to help evaluate this are to log observations in meetings and negotiations (like storing emails, meeting minutes) and track your project's interaction with key people (what actions were taken with them and when). Tools like 'Outcome harvesting' (see tools on the right) exist to help with this, often in combination with tools like the 'Rapid outcome assessment'. Defining interim outcome indicators can strengthen this process (see tools on the right). To determine the extent to which your publications contributed to change, take inspiration from the concept of 'research uptake'.

Key aspects for data-advocacy

- Evaluate the extent to which your SMART objectives were met and whether the assumptions (theory of change) underlying your data advocacy proved to be true.
- Determine clear indicators through which you will evaluate the overall impact of your data advocacy efforts. How relevant, goal-oriented, well-targeted, efficient and responsive were your data advocacy efforts?
- To demonstrate the outcomes and impact of your data advocacy, you can make a casual chain to show how the data was picked up by policymakers and how it contributed to the policy process.
- A good advocacy evaluation needs both 1) a clear definition of the constituents to whom you are accountable (donors and local communities), as well as 2) clear (interim) indicators to evaluate impacts.
- Consider if the 'Principles for Digital Development' were applied – did local communities 'own' the data and the advocacy process? Report back on your effectiveness to local communities, and jointly reflect and set future advocacy priorities.

Checklist for data advocacy

- ☑ Do you have clear indicators to evaluate the outcomes and impact of your advocacy efforts?
- ☑ Does your evaluation consider accountability towards both your donor and the local communities whose data was used?
- ☑ Have you developed a plan to log outcomes as your data advocacy activities are implemented?
- ☑ Has the project ensured ownership of data and the data advocacy process by the represented communities?

Relevant resources and tools

There are many useful tools, checklists and guidelines already available that provide guiding principles on the advocacy cycle in conflict-affected contexts. The following list provides an overview for practitioners interested in knowing more or refreshing their understanding of data and evidence based advocacy in fragile settings.

The '**Principles for Digital Development**' are living guidelines that help digital development practitioners to integrate established best practices into technology-enabled programming.

The '**Advocacy Strategy Framework**' was developed by the Center for Evaluation Innovation to provide a tool that organizations can use to formulate and articulate a theory of change underpinning their advocacy objective.

'**Advocacy Capacity Building**' is a training toolkit developed by Conciliation Resources to support advocacy capacity building in the context of the People's Peacemaking Perspective project. In addition to providing relevant tools for effective advocacy, it provides a basic introduction to advocacy and the six advocacy phases.

'**Policy Engagement: How Civil Society Can be More Effective**' is an advocacy toolkit developed by the Overseas Development Institute that civil society organizations can use to increase their advocacy success. The toolkit provides a robust introduction into evidence advocacy and an overview of approaches that can be used to overcome key obstacles during advocacy.

'**Policy Advocacy in Peace Building**' is a toolkit developed by Life & Peace Institute with a special focus on the nexus between advocacy and peacebuilding. Based on its regional experience in both Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, the toolkit provides relevant tools and resources that can be used to effectively conduct evidence based advocacy.

'**The Power of Evidence in Advocacy**' is a resource pack for trainers on evidence-based policy advocacy in East Africa, developed by the Overseas Development Institute and two regional partners. It provides relevant tools and frameworks for evidence based policy

'**Monitoring and evaluating advocacy**' was developed by the Center for Evaluation Innovation and UNICEF to gather key aspects of monitoring and evaluating of advocacy efforts. The toolkit also provides 17 data collection tools for measuring advocacy outputs, outcomes and impacts.

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