

Recommended tools for PMER of advocacy

2. Advocacy log

When should I use this? Regularly, to keep an ongoing record of activities.

What does it do? It **monitors**, for accountability; it captures what has been done.

Why is this useful? To ensure we remain transparent and accountable. To document whether we did what was planned. Logs also aid reflection and experiential learning that can inform future work.

What is an advocacy log and why use one?

Advocacy and influencing often take place in a context of uncertainty and frequent or unexpected change. Within this context, progress or success in advocacy often happens incrementally or through a series of small, sometimes overlooked, interactions with decision-makers and influencers. On other occasions, change happens rapidly as a result of multiple factors coming together at a 'critical juncture' to change the balance of political or other incentives and disincentives. This makes effective monitoring of advocacy-led programmes and projects crucial.

Keeping an advocacy log is an important way to record what we have done and what may seem, at the time, to be small or unscientific signs of change. This monitoring informs our ability to reflect on, analyse and judge how we need to adapt and re-plan our advocacy initiatives and tactics. This documenting makes it much easier to look back at these aggregated pieces of evidence and use them to tell a story of how our advocacy has contributed to any change achieved.

Reflection and learning are fundamental to understanding how and why we were able to contribute to change. They are also essential to inform continual improvements to strengthen our advocacy over time, and are key to communicating to communities, partners and funders the contributions we are making through advocacy.

Features of a good advocacy log

- **Ease of use** – it should be simple and intuitive so that users are willing and able to capture information quickly at the time it happens or soon afterwards.
- **Seeks to identify contribution** – where possible, it should give space so that specific contributions to change can be recorded. For example, WaterAid's input to a policy change process being acknowledged by a decision-maker, or our recommendations being reflected in the priorities of a ministry.
- **Good enough** – monitoring data should be good enough to enable reflection and analysis – it does not need to be perfect. This can simply mean copying

and pasting a short email into the log, and/or linking to a more in-depth document so that further detail can be found later if needed.

- **Frequent enough** – the advocacy log should be up to date, but not so busy that it takes a lot of time to compile or, worse, too long to read.
- **Useful and used** – the advocacy log should assist with learning, reflection and evaluation of advocacy. The log will only be useful if it is used both for entering information on a frequent basis, and for looking back at that information regularly.

Step by step: what to do

Preparing your advocacy log

1. As part of project design or planning, team members and partners should develop a **monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan**. Consider as part of this:
 - What information will you need to know to understand whether your advocacy is contributing to progress towards the change you are advocating for?
 - Where would you get that information from?
 - What qualitative and quantitative measures of success might there be for your advocacy? For example, response from decision-makers at meetings or in correspondence, whether your recommendations are reflected in policies, or changes in level of access to key influencers.
 - What information will you need for your own learning and reflection?
 - What information will be needed for reporting to communities, funders, partners or as part of internal WaterAid reporting?
2. **Identify all team members and partners who will need to use the log.** That is, anyone who is involved in advocacy, or anyone involved in M&E or reporting.
3. **Draft the key headings or column titles for your advocacy log.** You could use the template advocacy log in Project Center (see examples below). Headings should be simple and clear. Avoid using too many headings or the information required being unclear, otherwise it will not be used. For example:
 - Date of activity
 - Activity description (include guidance of what kind of detail is needed)
 - Outcomes you contributed to (if known – do not assume that you will know this for every entry in the log)
 - Any related evidence (if available)
4. **Test the log yourself first.** Think of an example of an advocacy activity – see if you can fill in the log with the relevant information in a meaningful way.
5. **Share the draft log, with some example entries, with all relevant team members for feedback.** Is it easy enough to use? Are the headings clear?

6. **Ask all relevant team members and managers to commit to using the advocacy log** – it will only be as useful as the information in it.

Entering information

7. **Use the log on an ongoing basis**, adding information **as soon as possible after an activity happens**, while the details are still fresh in your mind.
8. **Remember that an advocacy log entry can be ‘quick and dirty’** – you don’t need to write a thorough analysis every time. Often, a short sentence or two is enough. Copy and paste from other sources if needed.
9. **Include links to further information if possible**, such as event reports, media articles, and letters or emails from decision-makers.

Using the advocacy log for learning, reflection, adaptation and evaluation

10. **An advocacy log will only be useful if it is used!** The log should be an important input to ‘reflect and review’ meetings, team meetings, programme performance reviews, evaluations, and planning of future projects.

Examples of advocacy logs

Different forms of advocacy log are used across WaterAid and in other organisations. Sometimes they are referred to as ‘evidence logs’, ‘scrapbooks’ or ‘journals’. The important thing is that the log is suitable for your needs and context, and is helpful for your reflection, learning and evaluation of advocacy.

Advocacy log journal template in Project Center

A template advocacy log is included in Project Center as a tool to support project monitoring, along with guidance notes. You can access this in the ‘multimedia’ section of the Project homepage by clicking on ‘journals’.

Date

This can be a specific date or a period (such as a month) during which these activities and outcomes/successes happened.

Activity description

This will be context-specific but could include: policy engagement with government; parliamentary meetings, conferences or other events with an advocacy objective; traditional or social media activity with an advocacy objective; research or other publications you produce; or public campaigns or campaigning activity. Include information such as who participated in an event (for example a ministry, other NGOs, media), or who a report was sent to, and what role WaterAid played (for example co-organiser, speaker, co-author).

What outcomes did you contribute to (if known)?

This will depend on the activity, but could include a written or spoken commitment made by a government minister or official, media coverage, explicit mention of WaterAid's input or key recommendations within a report or policy, or agreement to collaborate with another agency as a result of the advocacy. It may not be possible to identify an immediate outcome from an advocacy activity because change can be slow and unexpected, so it is fine to leave this section empty.

Any related evidence (if available)

Include as attachments or links any relevant supporting evidence that will help you to look back on this activity as part of reflection, learning and evaluation. This might include an event report, links to media coverage, or important emails from decision-makers acknowledging WaterAid's input.

Healthy Start Evidence Log

The 'Healthy Start' global advocacy priority uses a similar format for the 'Healthy Start Evidence Log', which is a shared Google sheet that members of the Healthy Start Working Group can all enter information into. [View an example here.](#)

Country/region	Healthy Start aims/objectives and focus areas	International framework, initiative or campaign which could help to achieve these aims	Completed Healthy Start activity	Ongoing or planned Healthy Start activity/opportunities	Outcomes WaterAid have contributed to	Source of update	Date of last update

Policy and Campaigns Department's advocacy scrapbook

The global Policy and Campaigns Department (PCD) at WaterAid has used an 'advocacy scrapbook', which is a shared Google sheet that all members of PCD can enter information into. [View an example here.](#)

Date	Summary of activity and intervention	Change objective and aim	Outcome at which level, and potential impact	Level of contribution, and justification	Counter-factual (What else could have contributed apart from WaterAid? Could there have been negative knock-on effects?)	Challenges/learning (What approaches didn't work? What would you do differently? How to use this in planning?)	Source	Internal and external references