

Stronger Health Advocates Greater Health Impacts

Advocacy Capacity Support from PATH



“Ever since the PATH workshop, I have used the methodology to assist three national civil-society organizations to clarify their advocacy goals and objectives and to craft advocacy messages to articulate concerns about service delivery around the free maternity care policy in Kenya. The communique has now been delivered to the president in person by key religious leaders.”

— Eva Muthuri,
African Family Health





Introduction

We live in a world of rapid health progress.

Better medicines, access to contraceptives, and growing numbers of health workers are just a few of the advances that are saving and improving lives for millions. Around the globe, advocacy efforts are playing a critical role in solidifying and accelerating these gains. Across a wide range of health issue areas, champions and committed organizations are achieving success by ensuring supportive health policies, securing adequate funding, and holding their leaders accountable to fulfill health promises.

PATH supports these efforts by strengthening the capacity of local organizations and advocates. In Zambia, children's rights groups recently helped ensure the introduction of a national reproductive health curriculum in secondary schools after training from PATH. In Kenya, a maternal health coalition used a strategy developed during a PATH consultation to influence a new policy that increased access to maternal health services in one of the country's largest counties. And in Cameroon, a scientific organization that was introduced to advocacy through a PATH workshop is now using evidence they gathered on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) to urge national funding and policies for preventive services.

No matter what the health issue, PATH provides advocates the tools and assistance they need to make a real impact. We partner with donors, international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), governments, and community organizations worldwide to support both new and seasoned health advocates as they develop strategies and messages to influence policies, and create networks and coalitions. Based on an accessible ten-part framework that provides a deliberate method for advocacy success, our services help build the skills and knowledge base that foster the changes that advocates can replicate time and again.

A unique and tailored approach

PATH works hand in hand with health advocates and organizations to identify advocacy priorities and policy solutions, design strategies, and generate policy and funding changes to more effectively achieve health outcomes. **We have supported hundreds of participants in more than 50 countries,** primarily within Africa and Asia, to influence policy changes that support their health objectives.

Our approach is distinctive because it positions organizations and advocates for long-term success. Our services go beyond training to provide intensive mentoring, guidance, consultation, and on-the-job learning. Each of our partnerships is tailored to the specific needs of the clients we serve and adheres to the following hallmarks:

Local agenda setting is the top priority.

We believe that local ownership is critical for impact. Instead of entering engagements with predetermined policy goals, we support participants, whether new or experienced advocates, to assess local needs and determine which objectives best advance their health objectives. Our services and resources are adaptable to any health issue and context, which facilitates ownership and builds confidence in the advocacy process. We work with our clients and partners to develop, adapt, and identify tools, curricula, and resources as needed to support their interest areas.

Our support is based on a proven ten-part approach.

While all of our engagements are customized, they are grounded in proven principles and focused on results. Our facilitators and mentors employ a ten-part framework for policy change that takes participants through the process of developing an advocacy strategy to reach specific outcomes and goals. Participants depart with a replicable process that they can use to pursue advocacy on any issue in the future.



Policy outcomes drive the process.

We start with the end in mind. Our partners and clients seek results, whether it's more supportive health policies, funding for a health program, or commitment by national or sub-national leadership. We provide the tools that will help them develop an actionable strategy to achieve those goals.

We leverage the power of cross-sector learning and networking.

Our services are relevant to a wide range of partners and promote learning across health sectors. Instead of creating silos by issue area, we encourage learning and sharing across issues to help foster well rounded, effective health champions. Our workshops often bring together advocates with different concerns so they can learn from each other while appreciating what differences might be needed to achieve their goals. And since networks can be critical to achieving policy change, we help participants think strategically about how to harness coalitions to achieve objectives.

We go beyond traditional advocates to engage scientists, policymakers, and programmatic experts.

We reach beyond experienced champions to enlist newcomers to advocacy, such as program experts or scientists. These new voices provide credibility and additional access points for change, whether through technical leadership circles or the scientific community. We link experienced advocates with program specialists, while also helping organizations with limited advocacy experience integrate advocacy into their programs. No matter what their sphere of influence, participants learn how to present credible evidence in compelling ways to the peers or leaders that can help them achieve their policy goals.

Improving services for maternal health in Homa Bay County, Kenya

CHALLENGE:

In Homa Bay County, Kenya, maternal mortality rates are among the highest in the country. Most women give birth at home, even in areas with good access to facility-based services and free maternity care.

In 2013, DEVLINK, a local civil-society organization focused on gender-based health and education, engaged PATH as they worked to change the situation. PATH conducted a workshop that helped DEVLINK staff identify the policy change needed, develop an advocacy strategy, messages, and tactics. After the training, DEVLINK initiated a policy-change effort that addressed the challenges that hindered pregnant women from accessing health-care facilities.

With a small grant from PATH, DEVLINK conducted a survey to find out why so many women were giving birth at home. Women in Homa Bay cited frustrations with unskilled and inadequate health workers, poor attitudes and public relations by staff, lack of transportation during emergencies, and shortages of supplies and medicines in the government health facilities.

SOLUTION:

Through their work with PATH, DEVLINK determined that they needed the Homa Bay County government to include the issues in the County Plan, a document that provides the basis for annual budget allocations. They also decided that they needed the strength of a coalition, so they reached out to organizations that shared their focus on maternal health.

After forming a coalition, they created a credible task force to draft policy language to address the issues—including increased training for staff and more consistent supply of medicines—which was presented to the highest level county officials, including the county governor, county director, and county minister of health. The coalition then sponsored a debate and discussion to gain buy-in among county officials.

SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME:

Seven months later, county officials agreed to include the recommended policy changes in the Homa Bay County Plan. Officials are now working more closely with civic organizations to reach out to women in the community and alert them to recruitment of better-trained staff, the importance of skilled delivery services, and steadier supplies to facilities. DEVLINK is hopeful that additional resources will be allocated to staff training, transportation, and infrastructure issues in the next round of budget allocations.



“I have attended trainings before, but this was the first where we actually developed a strategy for achieving our objectives. The training also provided us the opportunity for new partnerships and to begin work in a new area. We now have stronger networks with other groups who care about the same issues.”

– Hellen Owino,
Centre for the Study of Adolescence

A robust set of services for health advocates

Our approach to advocacy support is practical, outcome-oriented, and focused on building the advocacy capacity of individual champions and change-making organizations.

Our services include:

- Tailored advocacy strategy development and skills-building workshops.**
Appropriate for individual organizations or groups, our workshops guide participants to identify policy barriers, develop tactics to influence decision-makers, and design an outcome-focused advocacy strategy. They are led by our expert and diverse team of global trainers who can adapt workshops for specific needs and make advocacy practical for both seasoned and new advocates.
- “On-the-job” mentoring, support, and strategic guidance.**
Because advocacy success is an ongoing process, we provide follow-on support for new and experienced advocates as they seek to implement their strategies and fulfill objectives. Our unique team of mentors and strategists provide guidance and support that helps advocates continue their professional development on-the-job.
- Individual consultations to identify policy barriers and solutions.**
For organizations with specific policy challenges, our expert team provides individualized guidance to help identify policymakers, messages, and entry points for reaching and influencing those decision-makers.
- Support for coalition building and networking.**
Building networks and coalitions can be a critical—but challenging—key to policy change success. We can help with strategic thinking about how to gain the right partners and allies and identify mechanisms for working together to achieve common goals.
- Guidance for impact evaluation of advocacy initiatives.**
Evaluating success is key to building advocacy capacity within organizations. We provide support for organizations and networks to evaluate their advocacy results and glean lessons they can apply in the future.
- Opportunities for new advocates to connect with policymakers and funders.**
Our team of experts can work with individual organizations or networks to identify advocacy connections and opportunities, whether at the global or national levels. These connections can take many forms, including new relationships with national officials or planning gatherings to influence high-level policy change and accountability.

Facilitating a new national sexual and reproductive health curriculum for Zambian teens

CHALLENGE:

In Zambia, teen pregnancy rates are very high, and many teenage girls drop out of school to get married because they are pregnant, particularly in rural areas of the country. An underlying contributor to this problem is a lack of education among young people about sexual and reproductive health (SRH), which had not been included in the country's school curriculum. In addition, teachers were not trained to educate students on these issues, so many were hesitant to address the problems in their classrooms.

The Children in Need Network, a Zambian network of about 200 organizational members working across the country for the rights of children, wanted to take action to address the teen pregnancy crisis. With some experience in advocacy but little expertise in health, they attended a workshop led by PATH that helped them to identify an advocacy approach, objectives, and tactics to reach decision makers. They were also able to forge connections to other groups with similar interests.

SOLUTION:

Children in Need knew that, in order to make systemic progress, the national government needed to commit to developing a comprehensive SRH curriculum and training teachers to implement it. When they approached education officials, they learned a curriculum was in development. This gave Children in Need an opportunity to review and advocate for input from young people and adolescents to be included and to help push for the rapid finalization and ultimately passage of the curriculum.

SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME:

The Zambian government has now completed the SRH curriculum, which includes new information on contraception, prevention of HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, and marriage. It will be taught to young people and adolescents ages ten and older across the country. Teacher training on the curriculum is now in process.

Children in Need is continuing their work on the issue by monitoring the teacher training to ensure that teachers gain the information they need. They are also using PATH's ten-part framework to train their organization's regional advocacy committees to identify policy goals and objectives they can achieve at the regional levels.



“After implementing advocacy efforts as a result of PATH’s support, Zambia now has a new curriculum with extensive information on adolescent sexual and reproductive health. I must say we didn’t expect to have such an experience!”

– Teresa Katempa Kabeka-Mwansa,
Executive Director, Children in Need Network

Tools of the trade: Building capacity for advocacy

Our ever-evolving menu of tools allows advocates and facilitators to build the capacity of their own and other organizations through online modules and training packages. Available tools include:

-  **Workshop curriculum on policy advocacy strategy development, Facilitator’s Guide (in Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese).**
-  **Training of Facilitator’s Manual.**
-  **A workbook for policy advocacy strategy development.**
-  **An interactive e-learning course (www.global3learning.org).**

Team with a global perspective: Our mentors, trainers, and facilitators

Our expert team of mentors, trainers, and facilitators is as global as our network of clients and partners. Their familiarity with a wide range of political landscapes and policy-making processes, as well as deep understanding of the diverse health needs of communities, allows them to address local contexts and support the development of tailored advocacy strategies.

Our trained facilitators are located in Cambodia, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine, United States, Vietnam, and Zambia. They have demonstrated expertise across a wide range of health issues, including sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health; HIV and AIDS; malaria; tuberculosis; non-communicable diseases (NCDs); immunization; and nutrition; as well as research and development and product introduction. Our curriculum is currently available in Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.



Mobilizing scientists to combat obesity and heart disease in Cameroon

In Cameroon, rapid urbanization and a growing middle class has led to a dramatic rise in heart disease, diabetes, and other issues related to poor diet and a sedentary lifestyle. The Health of Populations in Transition Research Group (HoPIT) is a research organization that collects data and implements projects on NCDs. Until attending an advocacy workshop led by PATH, they had never participated in advocacy.

After the workshop, scientists from the organization decided to use data from NCD research to persuade the minister of health to implement assessments and prevention education on heart disease and diabetes for patients in health-care facilities across Cameroon. The group will also advocate for scales and body fat monitors to be more available at clinics across the country. Because many Cameroonians aren't aware of the relationship between body fat and health, education could prevent tens of thousands of deaths from NCDs.

Entering the advocacy field can be a challenge for scientists and technical experts, but since working with PATH, HoPIT representative Jude Saji and his colleagues have a newfound belief that they can make a difference. "I can say that one of the key takeaways was the confidence that we can do these things," he says. "Now we know that we can change our country's policies to improve health—and we know how to do it."

"The skills I acquired at the PATH workshop have helped me in my daily advocacy work, especially engaging with policymakers. We have since had a chance to train county assembly legislators and I borrowed heavily from the training. Now we are developing a tool for legislators with material based on what we have learned."

– Grace Mbugua,
Director,
Women's Empowerment Link

"During the workshop, we were taken through all the parts: thinking about an issue, asked to set clear targets and deadlines, and challenged to be realistic about what we could accomplish. It was very helpful and practical. But the best thing was that we came out of that training feeling like, 'Yes, I can do this!'"

– Teresa Katempa Kabeka-Mwansa,
Executive Director,
Children in Need Network

“This work with PATH has been so important for our entire organization. The capacity building has been key. We left the training knowing exactly what we should do, and we were successful at it.”

– Esther Soti,
DEVLINK Kenya

Join us

PATH partners with donors, international organizations, and consortiums to help local organizations harness and deploy the power of advocacy, whether they have years of advocacy experience or are new to the field.

When you engage with PATH to provide training or consulting services, you will reap the benefit of our more than 30 years of expertise in health advocacy, social and behavior change, social marketing and communications, the development and delivery of new innovations, and strengthening technical capacities of local organizations.

Our services can be tailored to the needs and local contexts of the health issues and communities you work with. To learn more, visit <http://sites.path.org/advocacyimpact>.

To discuss how we might work together, please contact us at advocacyimpact@path.org.

Our valued clients and partners

Partners encompass multilaterals, international and local NGOs, coalitions and networks, health professionals, and parliamentarians and ministerial officials, including:

Africa Diabetes Congress
African Population and Health Research Center
AMREF
Association des Journalistes
CARE
Child Fund Zambia
Coalition for Health Promotion and Social Development
DEVLINK Kenya
Family Health Association Malawi
Ghana Health Services
Health Committee of Senegalese Parliament
Health for All Coalition
Health of Populations in Transition Research Group
The Hunger Project (multiple countries)
International Rescue Committee
JHPIEGO (multiple countries)
Karnataka State Government India
Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium
Kenya Red Cross Society
Management Sciences for Health
Save the Children (multiple countries)
Speak Up Africa
Stop TB Nigeria
Uganda Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
UNFPA
WaterAID
World Vision (multiple countries)
White Ribbon Alliance
Women’s Empowerment Link (WEL)



PATH is an international organization that drives transformative innovation to save lives and improve health, especially among women and children. We accelerate innovation across five platforms—vaccines, drugs, diagnostics, devices, and system and service innovations—that harness our entrepreneurial insight, scientific and public health expertise, and passion for health equity. By mobilizing partners around the world, we take innovation to scale, working alongside countries primarily in Africa and Asia to tackle their greatest health needs. Together, we deliver measurable results that disrupt the cycle of poor health.

Learn more at www.path.org.

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