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Assessments of National HIV Policy Implementation in Guatemala and El Salvador Help Identify Approaches for Overcoming Barriers to Implementation

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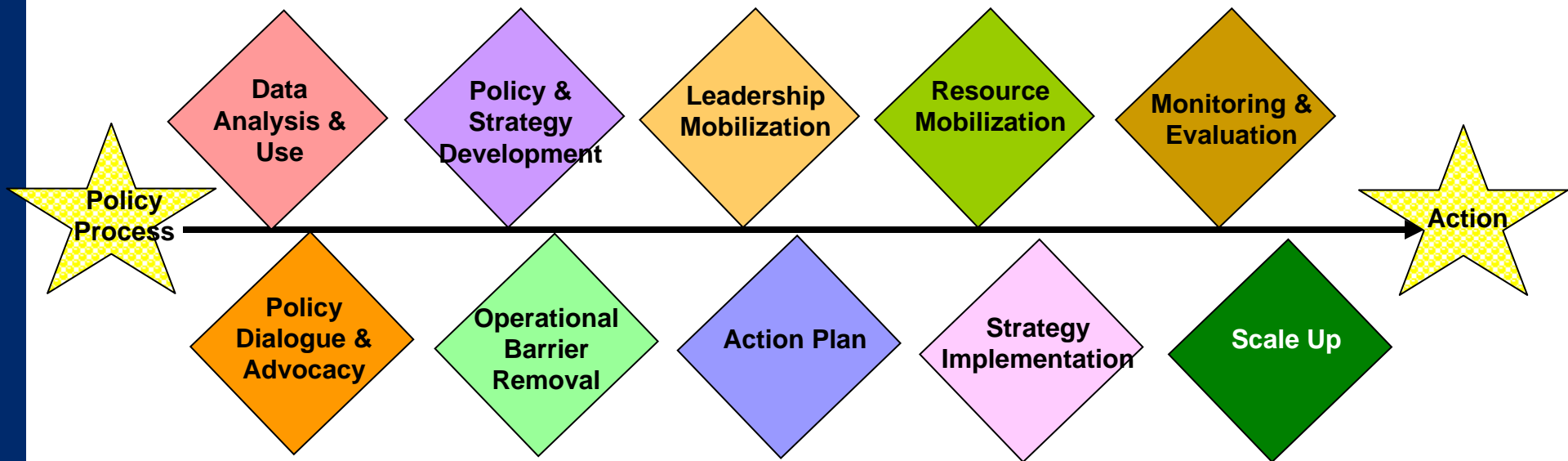
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What Is Policy Implementation?

Policy to Action Framework



Why Assess Policy Implementation?

- **Accountability** – hold policymakers/implementers accountable for achieving stated goals; reinvigorate commitment
- **Effectiveness** – understanding barriers to policy implementation improves program delivery
- **Equity and quality** – policy implementation is essential for ensuring equitable services, reducing inconsistencies among service providers

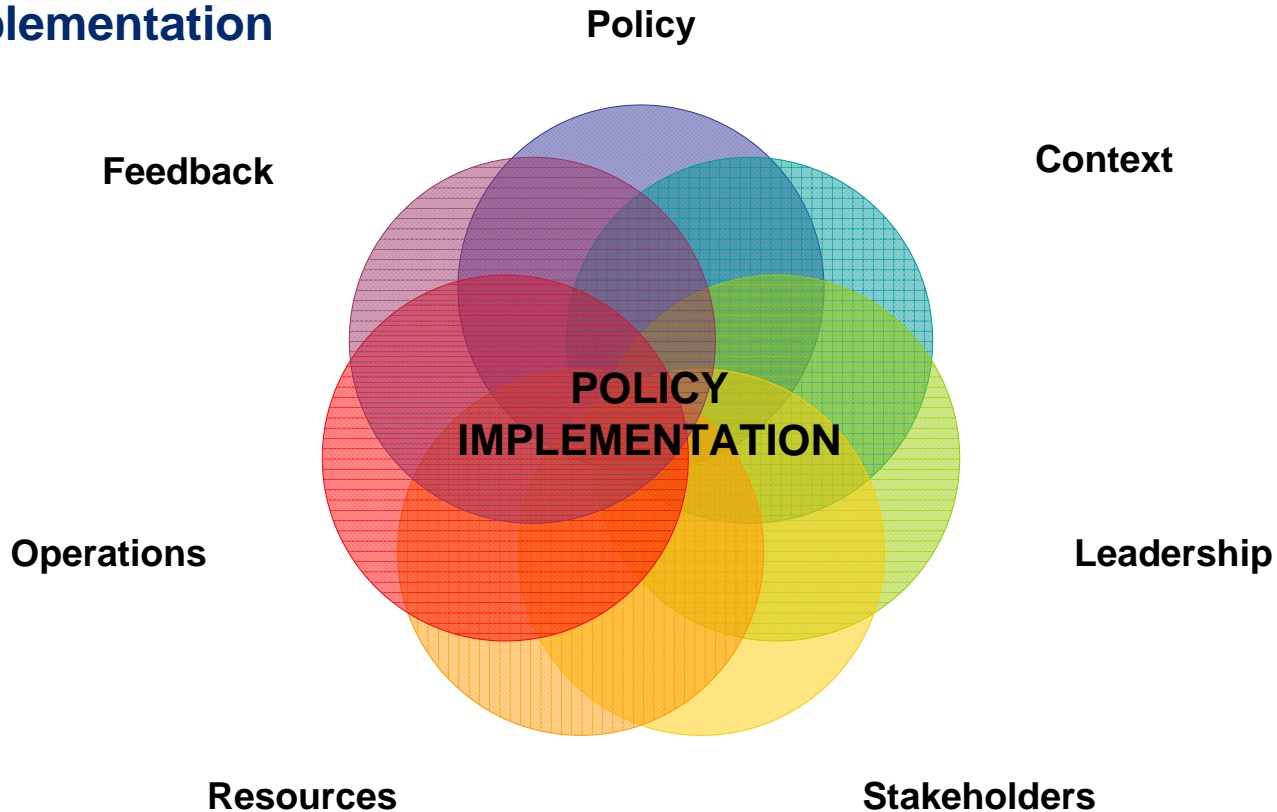
We need to be “clearer about what works and what does not work to produce intended program outcomes in the actual practice setting” (Love, 2003)

About the Policy Implementation Assessment Tool

- **Objectives:**
 - Assess the extent and nature of policy implementation
 - Identify facilitators for and barriers to effective policy implementation
 - Inspire dialogue and renewed commitment on the way forward
- **Format:**
 - Two questionnaires (one for policymakers and one for implementers/other stakeholders)
 - Gathers quantitative rankings and qualitative information
 - Same or similar questions in the two instruments to facilitate comparing perspectives of policymakers and implementers
 - Flexible: designed to be adapted to the policy/context

About the Policy Implementation Assessment Tool (cont.)

7 Dimensions of Policy Implementation



Applying the Tool: Step-by-Step Process

1. Select the policy
2. Form an in-country core team to guide the assessment
3. Make decisions about expectations
4. Adapt the questionnaires (and FGD guides as needed)
5. Identify key informants
6. Conduct in-depth interviews
7. Analyze data
8. Share findings and discuss recommendations / next steps

Applications of the Tool to Date

- Guatemala (2007): RH section of the *Social Development and Population Policy* (original pilot test)
- Uttarakhand, India (2008): state-level *Health and Population Policy* (included FGDs with client community-level health workers)
- Guatemala and El Salvador (2008): national HIV policies and plans

Methodology

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- Public Policy 638-2005 “On the prevention of STIs and response to the AIDS Epidemic”
- Core team included the National STI/HIV/AIDS Program, Ministry of Health and Welfare, HPI, UNAIDS, and NGOs
- Interviews with 6 policymakers and 26 implementers (total = 32)

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- National Strategic Plan on STIs, HIV, and AIDS, 2005–2010
- Core team included the National STI/HIV/AIDS Program, Ministry of Health and Welfare, HPI, UNAIDS, and NGOs
- Interviews with 12 policymakers and 21 implementers (total = 33)

Policy, Formulation, and Dissemination

- Policy goals must be SMART – specific, measureable, agreed upon, realistic, and time bound
- Policies must include goals and strategies for the most at-risk populations
- Policy formulation must be followed by strong dissemination efforts; too often, dissemination is event-oriented
- Policies must be followed up with and linked to implementation plans

Guatemala:
Only 15%
of implementers
have received
some type of
implementation
training

Social, Political, and Economic Context

- Changes in political leadership have the potential to (positively or negatively) affect commitment to HIV policy implementation and resources
- Effective inclusion of HIV and AIDS issues at the decentralized level should be encouraged
- While they are often a barrier, religious leaders are emerging as supporters of HIV efforts who should be engaged in the policy response

Leadership and Stakeholder Involvement

- Policies and plans must clearly articulate leadership roles and responsibilities for implementation and monitoring
- The leadership and oversight capacity of the National AIDS Councils (CONASIDAs) must be strengthened
 - In practice, HIV efforts are dominated by the health sector, rather than being a multisectoral effort, as intended in the policy/plan
- Coordination mechanisms must be put in place

Resources and Operations

- Funding dependent on international donors
- Funding levels viewed as insufficient
- NGO capacity / legal status can serve as a barrier to accessing funds, thus limiting participation (especially of MARP groups) in implementation

Guatemala: More than half of respondents believe that the financial resources for implementation are not sufficient

El Salvador: The majority of implementers from civil society experienced difficulties in accessing financing for implementation related to their varying degrees of eligibility and their negotiation and proposal capabilities

Feedback on Progress and Results

- Limited visibility of and use of monitoring and evaluation efforts
- Implementers receive limited feedback and information on advances by other partners – hinders collaboration, sharing best practices, and building on lessons learned

Recommendations

- Know your epidemic – ensure that policies and strategies are responsive to the most at-risk populations, including sex workers and MSM
- Disseminate policy guidance – implementers, local governments, the public, MARPs
- Strengthen multisectoral engagement, leadership, and oversight, including strengthened capacity of CONASIDAs
- Establish mechanisms to involve supportive partners, including the private sector and faith-based organizations

Recommendations

- Provide updated information regarding funding sources, levels, and distribution of available financial resources
- Strengthen the organizational, program, and financial management capacity of implementing partners, especially civil society, PLHIV, and MARP groups
- Raise the visibility and use of the monitoring and evaluation processes and data
- Establish effective channels so that organizations involved in implementation have timely access to information to make decisions, plan activities, and forge partnerships

Key Outcomes and Next Steps

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- ✓ Congress established a National Policy Monitoring Board to monitor implementation of RH and HIV policies (March 2008)
- ✓ Using findings to help re-launch the policy, generate awareness of the policy, and build commitment
- ✓ CONASIDA disseminated the findings on World AIDS Day (2008) and is using the assessment to help enhance its role in monitoring the HIV response

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- ✓ Informing the next five-year HIV strategic plan
 - ✓ Used as a source to evaluate the plan as part of the World Bank ASAP program
 - ✓ CONASIDA using the results to improve its oversight and coordination of the HIV response
 - ✓ Global Fund CCM members using the findings to facilitate better implementation of the national strategic plan and encourage increased political commitment among new political leaders
- This year, PASCA plans to use the tool with partners in Costa Rica and Panama to assess implementation of national HIV policies/plans

Advantages of Using the Tool

- Helps move from policy formulation to policy implementation
- Is flexible, should be adapted to the country context
- Is a systematic, yet user-friendly way to look at complex, dynamic processes
- Can complement quantitative indicators/data to explore the “why?” behind the numbers
- Renews commitment to a policy that may have been adopted a few years ago and is no longer at the top of the agenda
- Promotes participatory approaches and dialogue to devise potential solutions to challenges (*ownership, country-driven*)



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To learn more:

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Thank you!