POLICY DEVELOPMENT MODULE

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Abstract The Policy Development Module aims to make the Domestic Violence combatting policy planning process more structured and inclusive. The Checklist and Manual developed during IMPRODOVA research and innovation project form together a tool designed for Policy drafters, decision-makers and other key professionals responsible for planning the Policy's Feedback Cycle on national and local levels. This Policy Development tool enables a critical examination of relevant information and helps to consider all viable policy perspectives and tools, leading to increased understanding between different professions. It makes the Policy planning more inclusive and aids in engaging all salient stakeholders, including the representatives of the practitioners who work at the front-line and implement the policy. Consequently, the participants will develop a common purpose and a shared view on tackling the multidimensional societal challenges posed by Domestic Violence. The Checklist consists of eight sections, each of which should be noted when drafting a new policy document and planning the indicators for its follow-up. The Manual gives more details and practical examples of each section and therefore supports the use of the Checklist.

Introduction

National action plans and other policy documents are important processes to aid states in their implementation of human rights policies and other norms related to the prevention of domestic violence and the protection of its victims. This policy development module aims to make the policy planning process more structured and inclusive. The checklist and manual developed during the IMPRODOVA research and innovation project form together a tool designed for policy drafters, decision makers and other key professionals responsible for planning the policy's feedback cycle on both national and local levels.

At first sight, the tool may appear quite general and even simplistic. This impression is due to its cross-border and intra-national adaptability. The tool is, however, scalable and can be modified and adapted to different national or local needs, be it the drafting of a national action plan or local directions for a single profession.

The planning of policies and actions, whether national or local, should be inclusive and engage all salient stakeholders, including the representatives of the practitioners who work at the front line and implement the policy. The proposed tool enables a critical examination of relevant information and considers all viable policy perspectives and tools, leading to increased understanding between different professions. Consequently, the participants will develop a common purpose and a shared view on how to tackle the multidimensional societal challenges posed by domestic violence. Such solutions tend to avoid administrative silos and combine the theories of counter-violence work with practical knowledge on the field.[1]

An underlying approach for creating a new policy using this tool is to accompany each item of action with a systematic follow-up and evaluation process. With the help of the tool, the information from frontline practitioners and other information on different levels is gathered using an organized systematic method and fed into policy planning. The tool also supports the improvement of data collection and documentation of domestic violence for all users.

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[1] See for example: Munro, Eileen (2011): The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report; https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf

The checklist consists of eight different sections, each of which should be noted when drafting a new policy document and planning the indicators for its follow-up. The manual gives more details and practical examples of each section and therefore supports the use of the checklist.

Background and formation of the framework

All tools developed within IMPRODOVA follow the overarching aim of improving the well-being of victims of domestic abuse by reducing the frequency, impact and intensity of violence with the ultimate goal of overcoming violence entirely.[2] The tools developed must also be sensitive to the complexity of the phenomenon of domestic abuse in its societal, economic, psychological, as well as health and well-being dimensions. In line with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, any tool must also be sensitive to the structural nature of violence against women. This demand is based on the fact that gender-based violence and the frequent exposure of women and girls to serious forms of violence such as domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape is common.[3]

On the policy-making level, the problem often lies at the abstract and general formulation of the planned actions. It is hard to transform the abstract ambitions of the policy into practically implementable solutions and effects. The key high-level officials responsible for drafting the policies tend to tackle the problem of domestic abuse from the point of view of their own background or the Ministry, which may not support communicating with other relevant fields horizontally and all relevant actors vertically. This policy development module aims to overcome these common shortcomings of policymaking and assessment by addressing the planning with a structured checklist and a manual on its use.

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[2] According to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and its Explanatory Report, any tool must also be sensitive to the structural nature of violence against women. The Explanatory Report can be found at: https://rm.coe.int/16800d383a .

[3] For more statistical information on Gender Based Violence, see Gender Statistics Database of the European Institute for Gender Equality, available at: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/genvio .

Policy Maturity Model Checklist

1. Feedback methods	Yes	In process
1.1. Check relevant country reports of human rights convention monitoring mechanisms		
1.2. Include systematic feedback from the grass-root level to the top		
1.3. Confirm confidential whistleblowing mechanisms, both internal and external		
1.4. Ensure systematic feedback from NGOs		
1.5. Include the victim's perspective		
2. Indicators	**Yes**	**In process**
2.1. Are there indicator(s) measuring prevalence		
2.2. Are there indicator(s) measuring the number and availability of services		
2.3. Are there indicator(s) measuring concrete resources		
2.4. Are there indicator(s) measuring the human rights-based approach		
3. Dealing with overlaps	**Yes**	**In process**
3.1. Is the approach systemic and coordinated with a combined effect with other policies		
3.2. Are the reporting cycles sufficiently open to the parties		
3.3. Are the reporting cycles frequently enough		
3.4. Is there a common database of previous reports		
4. How are boundaries crossed?	**Yes**	**In process**
4.1. Is there a multi-agency approach on the strategical level		
4.2. Is there a multi-agency approach on the practical level		
5. Theory and Practice	**Yes**	**In process**
5.1. Are the policies made into practical guidelines/tools		
5.2. Is there regular training on the guidelines/tools		
5.3. Are the superiors committed to the use of the guideline/tools		
5.4. Are the existing guidelines/tools being used on the field		
6. Specified Resources	**Yes**	**In process**
6.1. Are specific resources allocated to the implementation		
7. Maturity presentation	**Yes**	**In process**
7.1. Is a sufficiently nuanced maturity level presentation being used		
7.2. Is reporting back to the grass-root level included		
8. Defining 'fully implemented'	**Yes**	**In process**
8.1. Is 'fully implemented' defined in the policy		

Manual - How to use the Policy Maturity Model Checklist

Introduction

In this manual, the dimensions of the checklist are explained in *cursive* and written as concrete instructions for those responsible for drafting of the policy maturity model. In some of them, also an ideal implementation of the policy is written. Both national and local examples of each dimension are given.

Categories of the Checklist

1. Feedback methods

1.1 Check relevant country reports of human rights convention monitoring mechanisms (such as GREVIO)

When implementing a policy, gather all information from the related human rights conventions and their monitoring bodies' reports. Ideally, the documents can be found in a national, regularly updated database.

National: See the relevant conventions obligating your country, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Elimination on all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OHCHR) and especially, if applicable, The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and Combating Violence against Women (The Istanbul Convention). Check especially the Country reporting mechanisms of each Convention.

Local: See above. Also check for national bodies' recommendations or directions given directly to the entity/entities you are addressing, such as for example the National police board's directions to the police forces.

1.2 Include systematic feedback from grass-root level to the top

Organize regular information gathering from the grass-root level to the top.

National: Organize regular anonymous collection of feedback from the local level. For example, the National police board may send out a questionnaire to the local police forces. The questionnaire may include the experiences of the personnel of using a specific tool, such as a risk assessment form, to find out factors that may enhance or hinder the effective prevention of domestic violence.

Local: See above. In addition, experiences can be gathered also by interviewing the local professionals.

1.3 Confirm confidential whistleblowing mechanisms, both internal and external

Establish a feedback method within the entity/entities that the policy addresses. Internally, a whistleblower can bring concerns to the attention of the managing level within the organization. Externally, a whistleblower can bring concerns to light by contacting a third party outside of the concerned organization such as the ombudsman.

Ideally, the whistleblowing mechanisms are well established and their information is being utilized systematically. Furthermore, every police department and social welfare district should have at least one 'DV liaison officer' to act as a contact person for organizational personnel, NGOs and ministries. The liaison officer could share information and facilitate training in domestic violence but also report to the ombudsman e.g. on negligence in domestic violence cases, lack of resources or non-fulfilment of required training.

National: Most countries have a mechanism for individual concern reporting, such as the ombudsman-system or the national preventive mechanism, an international initiative under the governance of the UN Optional Protocol of the Convention Against Torture. However, some countries have specific independent rapporteurs for themes such as violence against women. These mechanisms should be utilized for external whistleblowing. Regularly check the reports of the external monitoring mechanisms in order to gather silent messages of possible concerns related to the services of a specific entity, such as the police. Internally, the whistle-blowing mechanisms should include the possibility of anonymous reporting.

After analyses, examination and actions, the information gathered by whistle-blowing mechanism(s) should be shared with the relevant audience and published openly, if publishing is possible without ethical dilemmas. The gathered information should be utilized in training, in raising awareness, improving organizational performance and in encouraging employees to speak up when needed.

Local: See above. In addition, the services are monitored locally depending on the country. For example, the municipalities responsible for organizing/producing/procuring a support service should monitor the level of the service and have both internal and external reporting mechanisms for individual complaints.

1.4 Ensure systematic feedback from NGOs and relevant Trade Unions

Establish regular meetings/roundtables/hearings with relevant NGOs.

National: Whenever planning a national action plan/policy document, NGOs should be included in the process of planning. When following up the implementation, ministries can organize roundtables with the relevant NGOs. Working closely with NGOs that work with vulnerable groups and marginalized people (immigrants, refugees, homeless women, sex workers, the elderly, victims of honour-related violence, and disabled people) is recommended.

Local: NGOs be included in strategic and practical multi-agency approaches, such as local working groups responsible for preventing violence. Whenever the victim of violence is in a vulnerable situation due to her/his immigration status, disability, age or extreme fear, special attention should be paid on inviting a competent NGO specialist to the multi-agency meeting with the consent of the victim in order to meet her/his special needs.

1.5 Include the victim's perspective

Establish a method for hearing from experts by experience, either including them in the implementation process or gathering regular feedback from targets of the policy.

Ideally, every year relevant NGOs and Victim Support Services are invited to give a performance feedback of how effectively public authorities have managed to intervene and prevent domestic violence and to assist victims. NGOs and Victim Support Services are also invited to give suggestions how public authorities can improve these areas.

National: Some countries have well-organized groups of experts by experience, which they regularly include in policy planning and monitoring. This may be done by organizing seminars or asking for written statements at several stages of implementation.

Local: On the local level, the services should gather regular feedback from the customers/patients of the service. This should include the possibility of giving feedback and identifying yourself for later follow-up, as well as anonymous input. The gathered information should feed directly to the service development as well as the monitoring of the implementation of the policy.

2. Indicators

2.1. Indicator(s) measuring prevalence

Check for Repeated / Frequent survey information ➔ for example the number of incidents, prevalence, attitudes, type / severity of injury etc.

Ideally, information systems should be user-proof and enable an individual to enter only correct data in the system. For data accuracy, mandatory classifications should be versatile enough in order to enable the user to enter exact data. Statistical discrepancies should be analysed. Discrepancies and disparities that indicate negligence or malpractice will then be examined.

National: Collect and follow information from crime offence reports, criminal justice measures such as restraining orders, regular victim surveys and health statistics / surveys. See also surveys measuring changes in attitudes related to violence or gender roles etc.

Local: Follow numbers of incidences, for example the local police force statistics, number of house calls based on violence and hospital/ER-visits with relevant ICD-codes. See also possible data from child protection services related to domestic violence.

2.2. Indicator(s) measuring the availability of special services/experts

Measure the number of special services/experts available

National: Follow the number and availability of special services for victims, perpetrators and children exposed to domestic violence. Also follow the number of used special services.

Local: See above. Compare your local situation to relevant counterparts, such as best-performing similar-sized local entities. Measure the number of available experts in the relevant fields, i.e. having received specialized training on domestic violence.

2.3. Indicator(s) measuring concrete resources

Measure how much concrete, both human and monetary resources are allocated to the function (i.e. policy/service etc.) at hand.
National: Measure the amount of resources allocated to the implementation of the relevant policies analysing the government budget.

Local: See whether domestic violence work has specified resources on the local budget level, i.e. municipality/ local police force/ health care / social work entity. See how the relevant services allow the staff to allocate time to domestic violence specified work. See, if specializing in domestic violence is made possible in each relevant entity.

2.4. Indicator(s) measuring the human rights-based approach

Base the indicators solidly on the human-rights-perspective in order to avoid national distortions (i.e. the lack of understanding of gendered violence), using external evaluation where available. For the critical understanding of the human-rights based approach to your implementation, see to external/ expert legal evaluation of your performance.

The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) has developed a conceptual and methodological framework of indicators that can be applied and contextualised at the national level. The OHCHR conceptual and methodological framework adopts a common approach to identifying indicators for monitoring civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights.

The framework recommends the development of structural, process and outcome indicators. This configuration of indicators should help assess the steps being taken by states in addressing their obligations – from commitments and acceptance of international human rights standards (structural indicators) to efforts being made to meet the obligations that flow from the standards (process indicators) and on to the results of those efforts (outcome indicators)[4]*.*

National: Firstly, see to the recommendations by expert bodies following up the implementation of relevant human rights conventions, secondly, see to extracts from peer review such as the UPR, thirdly, see to findings of national external evaluations of national action plans etc. and fourthly, see to critical expert legal opinions in international sources.

Local: In terms of basing your indicator on the human-rights perspective, see to your national monitoring mechanisms reports on the policy performance at hand, such as the ombudsman's opinions, national bureau level recommendations etc.

3. Dealing with overlaps

3.1 Ensure a systemic and co-ordinated approach

When drafting and planning the implementation of a policy, make sure the approach is systemic, human-rights-based and in line with other policies with a similar aim. Policies should be carried out consistently and in a coordinated fashion with special attention on how different parts relate to each other and the rest of society. Ensure that the chosen approach leads to a combined effect with other policies.

National: When drafting a new policy for the national level, make sure you check other existing policies that relate to your subject, such as other action plans based on human rights conventions or public health promotion.

Local: See above.

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[4] For more information, see: https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Indicators/Pages/framework.aspx

3.2 Ensure the existence of open reporting cycles

Ensure that the reporting cycle is as open and accessible as possible, and that data is being accumulated and utilized from previous reporting cycles. An open cycle means firstly that the individuals responsible for reporting are aware of each other's and their own responsibilities, thus avoiding double reporting. Secondly, open reporting refers to the responders being aware of the timetables and the bigger picture.

National: Make the reporting cycle plus the actual report(s) public, thus the individuals responsible for reporting may use the information previously collected and can see where their share of reporting adds value to the national picture and points for action. This also enables the use of the reports for other purposes, such as service development.

Local: When gathering information at the local level, make sure they are aware of the national level reporting.

3.3 Ensure sufficiently frequent reporting cycles

The individuals responsible for reporting should gather information or experiences from the grass-root level of frontline responders, thus making it visible if resources are too scarce or other problems hinder implementation.

National: Keep the reporting cycle sufficiently frequent. This could mean as frequent as once a year, or in the case of an action plan, using mid-term evaluation plus final evaluation. In between the reporting cycles, make sure you gather information from the experiences of the experts as well as grass-root level practitioners.

Local: See above.

3.4. Confirm the existence of a common database.

Build an accessible database of the reports gathered.

National: The Ministry of Foreign affairs (or equivalent), who is responsible for the reporting internationally, should uphold a database of the national report cycles and their reports.

Local: Individuals responsible for local reporting should be made aware of the national database and how to utilize it in their own reporting. When compiling local reports, ideally, they also should be gathered in a database, i.e., that of the municipality.

4. How are boundaries crossed?

4.1. Ensure the existence of a multi-agency approach on the strategical level

When there are boundaries, make sure to have a mechanism (structures) where key persons meet and plan together overarching next steps for implementation, noting that some steps may be common.
National: Establish a multi-agency working group responsible for drafting national action plans and following up their implementation. Such a national structure may exist already based on Art. 10 of the Istanbul Convention.

Local: Establish a local multi-agency working group responsible for the strategic planning and implementation of national action plans and other relevant norms on the local level. The strategic planning may include safety planning, local action plans related to combatting domestic violence, awareness-raising etc.

4.2. Ensure the existence of a multi-agency approach on the practical level

National: Establish national steering groups for major practical multi-agency solutions, such as SARCs (Sexual Assault Resource Centre), MARACs (multi-agency risk assessment conferences) etc.

Local: Establish necessary practical multi-agency solutions for customer work, such as MARAC-teams. Establish local steering groups for supporting practical multi-agency solutions, which has managing level participation from each relevant entity involved in the practical solution.

5. Theory and Practice

5.1. Ensure that policies are made into practical guidelines/tools

Legal implications need to be made into something very concrete and systematic in order to be fulfilled. Concrete tools; such as risk assessment forms, etc. should be made part of the daily practice and implanted into the professionals' routines. Follow-up should be routine, i.e. gathering registered data of the use of the tools. Thus, also evidence will be gathered of the effectiveness of the chosen tool.

National: Make sure that major international conventions as well as EU and national laws are accompanied with clear and practical guidelines when being implemented at the grass-root level. For example, draft a national tool for the implementation of a specific obligation, such as risk assessment.

Local: Make sure, that treatment/support paths of clients/patients such as emergency rooms, maternity clinics, the police, educational institutes, asylum centres etc. are established on the local level.

5.2. Ensure that regular training exists on the guidelines/tools

The importance of systematic and built-in training of the use of the concrete tool(s) cannot be exaggerated. Even when the use of a specific tool is compulsory, it may deteriorate with time if not overseen by regular training. The danger is that without adequate training a tool may be used in a counter-effective manner.

Ideally, all professionals active in the field of domestic violence prevention or intervention receive basic training on the necessary guidelines and tools as well as in-depth training during service.

National: Make sure that available training exists for professionals being trained at universities or polytechnics, as well as police schools. When possible, make sure the training modules are compulsory. For in-service training, create training materials available for all relevant professionals, such as e-training platforms.

Local: Enable access for professionals to in-service training on a yearly basis. Make sure the training materials and availability is up to standard. Make sure that regular and systematic training is available for tools being used locally, such as risk assessment forms. Demand that new employees always take the training before using the tools in practice.

5.3. Commit superiors to the use of the guideline/tools

Even with the most effective and concrete tools, if superiors are not committed to the chosen practice, it will not cause the expected results.

Ideally, policies, goals, objectives and roles are well defined in the organizations' guidelines and superiors are competent to monitor and steer these sectors. Competence consists of knowledge, skills and attitudes, whereupon the competence and motivation in domestic violence related work has to be taken into account already in the recruitment process of superiors. Furthermore, the entities should have local "centres/hubs of excellence" regarding domestic violence, so that designated teams may specialize into domestic violence cases/issues.

National: Make sure that the relevant ministers and other government officials are informed about the level of implementation of each policy. Commit the ministers with regular reporting.

Local: It is of utmost importance, that the management of local entities enable expertise-building and specializing in domestic violence cases, also on the level of management. Another way of committing superiors to the chosen tools is to involve them in steering groups and in the strategic planning of their use.

5.4. Ensure the use of existing guidelines/tools on the field

Ideally, domestic violence related tools, used by the frontline responders, are compatible with one another and with the particular information systems of the authorities. Tools are designed to be user-friendly and to make frontline responders' work easier and more efficient.

Furthermore, exact guidelines provide practical and concrete information. Vague or abstract expressions are avoided as they may describe obligations imprecisely and may cause people to interpret them in different ways. The guidelines should provide practitioners with solutions and concrete examples of good practices.

National: Measure and follow-up on the use of the chosen tools. If the tools are not used extensively and effectively, investigate the reasons for this. Based on the results, improve the tools, skills, abilities, attitudes or professionals' access to training.

Local: See above. Also, regularly ask for experiences of the use of the chosen tools for development purposes.

6. Specified Resources

6.1 Ensure the allocation of specific resources for implementation

Every action should be accompanied with a financial plan/information on the resources and how to implement them. Financial resources should also include human resources. The specific tasks should be incorporated into the task description of specific professions, thus, the normal mobility of labour will not deteriorate professionalism.

Ideally, financial resources should encourage the authorities to develop preventive measures. Evaluating the efficiency of preventive actions is difficult and may lead to a situation where allocated resources are used only to intervene with violence that has already happened. Financial planning should also include and define preventive measures.

National: Make sure that a sufficient amount of resources is allocated to the implementation of the relevant policies analysing the government budget.

Local: Make sure that local level domestic violence work has specified resources on the local budget, i.e. municipality / local police force / health care / social work entity. Make sure that the relevant services allow the staff to allocate time to domestic violence specified work. Ensure that specializing in domestic violence work is made possible in each relevant entity. Ensure that the person-years allocated to domestic violence work are actual; for example, in case of an absence, a substitute employee is recruited.

7. Maturity presentation

7.1. Confirm the use of a sufficiently nuanced maturity level presentation

Often the traditional traffic light presentation of maturity level is too vague. Thus, level(s) of policy maturity could be presented by percentages (of fully implemented). One additional prospect of making the maturity presentation more nuanced is the possibility of dividing one large task into smaller elements and following the implementation of each one separately. Also, possible reporting timetable/acceleration of time frame of reporting could be considered.

National: For example, when looking at the implementation of the required number of shelter places, first decide what the sufficient number of shelter places is. Then decide on the required distances and accessibility criterion for the required number of places. Thirdly, compare the current situation and see to the percentages by which it meets the chosen criterion.

Local: For example, when looking at domestic violence cases reported to the police, see how many of them were referred to support services. When the required number of cases is 100 %, compare the reality to that. Make sure that the local area data collection system is the same, so that situations are comparable.

7.2. Include reporting back to the grassroot level

If maturity is pending, a built-in alarm should go off giving a signal back to the grassroot level that implementation is not complete.

Ideally, information should be gathered on where lack of implementation exist and after an alarm goes off, the specific information is fed back to the grassroot level responsible for finalizing the implementation.

National: The gathering of information should be incorporated into the policy implementation reporting cycle. Thus, the information from a pending task is being fed back to the national entity responsible for the implementation of the function. For example, when looking at the prevalence of multi-agency co-operation, the availability of the multi-agency risk assessment conferences MARACs may imply a decrease in the recognition of domestic violence. Thus, the information will go back to the local level alarming them that sufficient level of implementation is still pending.

Local: For example, the local multi-agency working group responsible for the strategic planning and implementation of national action plans on the local level should gather data from the local entities, such as hospitals and police stations, on the level of implementation. When the alarm goes off that a task is not completed, for example that a treatment/support path does not exist, the information would be sent back to the entities at hand.

8. Defining 'fully implemented'

8.1. Define 'fully implemented' in the policy

What is good enough should be agreed upon prior to drafting the policy document and when reporting, comparing the success rate to the set level of "fully implemented" should be carried out (i.e. in the form of the numeric indicators).
Typically, 'Fully implemented' should be a combination of numeric and areal attributes.

Ideally 'Fully implemented' should be a living and flexible concept: When knowledge on the topic increases, the understanding of what is fully implemented may be redefined.

National: For example, when looking at the full implementation of the policy of having a sufficient number of rape crisis centre places available, the criterion should first be decided as to what are the numeric indicators of fully implemented: (how many places, where they should be located as to be accessible enough to match the geographic realities).

Local: For example, if the policy at hand is the improved recognition of violence at maternity clinics, 'fully implemented' could be measured by asking the clinics on which percentage of cases have they performed universal screening of domestic violence.

For example, the Istanbul convention obligates that the parties shall provide or strengthen the appropriate training of the relevant professionals dealing with victims or perpetrators. For instance, regarding the police forces, this policy is fully implemented when all the police officers who work with clients have received training.

For example, risk assessment by police should be mandatory for every domestic violence case. When the number of conducted risk assessments equals the reported cases with the classification of 'domestic abuse', the policy of conducting risk assessment can be considered as fully implemented.