

Implementing Pro-Poor Policies for Poverty Alleviation: The Case of the White Paper on Families in South Africa

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Abstract—The role of the government to tangibly alleviate poverty, improve and sustain the quality of people's lives remains a "work in progress" twenty-two years after the dawn of democracy in South Africa despite a host of socio-economic programs and pro-poor policies and legislations. This paper assesses the development process and the implementation of the White Paper on Families in South Africa as one of the pro-poor policies intended to curb poverty and redress the imbalances of the apartheid regime. The paper is the result of a qualitative implementation research theory facilitated through in-depth interviews with social work managers complemented by literature and policy review techniques. It investigates the level of basic knowledge and understanding as well as the implementation challenges of the White Paper on Families as causes of its failure. The paper emphasizes the importance of the family-centered approach in the implementation of pro-poor policies. To facilitate the understanding of the White Paper on Families by its users, the Department of Social Development needs take stock of the identified challenges of its implementation so as to facilitate its success in fostering positive family well-being that will directly contribute to the overall socio-economic development of South Africa.

Keywords—Poverty alleviation, pro-poor policy, social development, social welfare, South Africa.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE 2030 "Our Future – Make it Work" vision for South Africa set out in the National Development Plan strives to ensure that "family life strengthens women, men and children". Similarly, the first point in the Department of Social Development (DSD)'s "Ten Point Plan" is to "rebuild family, community and social relations in order to promote social integration", a vision embodied in the White Paper on Families in South Africa (WPF). Although the WPF is meant to assist in alleviating poverty and redressing the imbalances of the past, families, meant to be at the center of development, still face crises such as poverty, unemployment, HIV and AIDS, crime, violence and alcohol abuse on a daily basis especially in poor vulnerable communities. The persistence of such crises is partly due to the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the WPF which is not known, understood and correctly implemented by its users. The WPF also faces various

implementation challenges that are discussed in this paper.

This paper defines a White Paper as a document used as a means of presenting government policy preferences prior to the introduction of legislation. Its publication serves to test the climate of public opinion regarding a policy issue and enables the government to gauge its probable impact [4]. In testing the climate before introducing a legislation means that proper mechanism is important to facilitate the implementation of the policy at hand. Thus, the hypotheses of this paper that; primo, the understanding of a policy by its users is paramount and an implementation strategy is a precondition for its success.

This study used a qualitative implementation research methodology within a participatory process through in-depth interviews and complemented by literature and policy review. The respondents were social work managers from the DSD and social work practitioners from the government and NGO sectors in Gauteng (Johannesburg) and Free State (Bloemfontein). The study identified implementation outcomes and process implementation variables to summarise the knowledge and understanding of the WPF by participants. It also used the performance implementation approach through three criteria [1] and the analysis of the institutional structures and governance approach in investigating the implementation challenges of the WPF. The study found that the WPF was not understood by the users and therefore not properly implemented. However, it emphasised the importance of the WPF to support preventive and developmental social work programs through a family-centred approach. Thus, the study recommended the consideration of the three criteria and the institutional structures and governance to facilitate the successful implementation of the WPF.

The aim of the research was to firstly investigate the extent of basic knowledge and basic understanding of the WPF by its users, thus suggesting ways of improving their basic knowledge and facilitating their understanding of the WPF. The research also was aimed at identifying the challenges users face in the implementation of the WPF and to consequently, suggest potentially innovative solutions to the identified implementation challenges.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study used the implementation research theory within a participatory process. Implementation means a specific number of activities intended to fulfil a defined action or program [5]. An important goal of an implementation research, as it is in this study, is to "understand the factors that

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impede or promote effective implementation” [5]. Implementation research attempts to solve a wide range of implementation problems [15] as it is the case for the implementation of the WPF.

A. Public Policy Implementation Research

A public policy is a principle of behaviour or conduct thought to be desirable or necessary, especially as formally expressed by a government or other authoritative body [1]. It is appropriate to argue that a public policy is a set of solutions developed by an authorized body, eventually a government institution, to address an identified and analysed matter of public concern [1].

A White Paper is a more refined discussion document, which is a broad statement of government policy [6]. In principle, White Papers are initiated by government departments (as in the case of the DSD for the WPF) or can be drafted by a task team designated by government ministers of departments. The WPF perceives a family unit as a key development imperative. Consequently, it pursues mainstreaming family issues into the policy making initiatives of the government to promote positive well-being of the family and the overall socio-economic development in South Africa [4]. The vision of the WPF is to achieve “well-functioning families which are loving, peaceful, safe, stable, and economically self-sustaining, that also provides care and physical, emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual, and intellectual support for their members” [4]. The WPF is therefore a public policy through which the government undertook to improve socio-economic conditions of families and the whole economy in general.

A public policy implementation is the process of moving an idea of a department from a refined concept to a reality. For [12], implementing a policy is the stage whereby the government executes an adopted policy in accordance with a specific legislation or policy action. For these authors, many government bodies responsible for respective areas of policy, are strictly made responsible for their implementation. The DSD is therefore the responsible Department for the implementation of the WPF.

Reference [3], citing Lester & Goggin, understands implementation as a distinct stage in the policy process that concerns the transformation of a policy idea or expectation to action aimed at remedying social problems. The approach to policy implementation [3] is adopted by this study. For these authors, policy implementation reflects a complex change process where government decisions are transformed into programs, procedures, regulations, or practices aimed at social betterment as are the overall vision, the mission, the objectives and the programs or actions of the WPF. Understanding the vision, mission, objectives and programs of the WPF by the participants is therefore critical for its successful implementation.

B. Research Process

Through a participative process, this study meant that change is usually easier to achieve when those affected are

directly involved in the research. The key informants of this study were thus social work (middle) managers in all DSD directorates at national, provincial and district-levels. Implementation research is especially concerned with the users of the policy and not purely the production of knowledge according to [16]. As suggested by these authors, such users included, for this study, social work managers and program coordinators in some cases, who are responsible for the implementation of the WPF.

C. Sampling Strategy

“Purposive sampling” which is a non-probability sampling technique was used during the study. Purposive sampling is also referred to as judgmental, selective, or subjective [8]. This type sampling consists of selecting participants based on the researcher’s judgment, the purpose of the study and the participants’ knowledge and experience [14]. Through this sampling strategy, participants for the interviews were selected based on the purpose of the study, namely, to understand the basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF as well as its implementation challenges. Participants were selected because they were social work managers at national, Free State and Eastern Cape DSD.

D. Data Collection Strategy

The researcher collected data through two main techniques: in-depth interviews with social work managers and the literature and policy review on the WPF.

The in-depth interviews were undertaken after the granting of the ethical clearance by the University of the Free State and the approval from the national DSD between April and June 2016. In-depth interview as a research technique cedes insights into people’s experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings. The in-depth interviews (face-to-face and telephonic) in the case of this study included semi-structured questions to allow comparisons between the views held by different participants to achieve a balance between factual inputs and expressed opinions. Participants were encouraged to present their views within their own contexts and experiences. Semi-structured questions retained enough structure to allow for some comparability of answers and allowed the researcher more control over the interview process.

E. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from the in-depth interviews were qualitative. A qualitative data analysis was therefore necessary to address the aim of the study: “investigating the participants’ basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF and the challenges they encounter in its implementation”. This qualitative data analysis consequently facilitated the formulation of recommendations on how to successfully implement the WPF with additions from the literature review.

Through an integrated comparative data analysis process, the participants’ views and the literature review content were interpreted through different themes responding to the implementation research methodology to assess the basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF by the participants

and their perceptions about its implementation challenges.

F. Participants

The study was conducted through three different sites: the national DSD, the Free State Province and the Eastern Cape Province for the in-depth interviews. A total of 60 social work managers participated in the study. Three of the social work managers were coordinators for the family unit, one at national and two in provinces.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

These findings are discussed in response to the four key objectives of the study: (1) to investigate the basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF by the participants; (2) to recommend ways of facilitating the basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF; (3) to investigate the challenges participants face in the implementation of the WPF; and (4) to suggest potentially innovative solutions to the experienced implementation challenges.

A. Basic Knowledge and Understanding of the WPF

In order to investigate the implementation challenges, the basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF by the participants was tested through seven research statements.

Research Statement 1

“The first point in the DSD’s “Ten Point Plan” focuses on “rebuilding family, community and social relations in order to promote social integration”, a vision embodied in the country’s WPF” [4]. Participants were asked if they were aware of the existence of the WPF.

Feedback 1: Awareness of the Existence of the WPF.

TABLE I
 AWARENESS OF THE EXISTENCE THE WPF

Participants	Level of awareness of the existence of WPF				Total
	Not	Somewhat	Usually	Very much	
National DS	00	01	12	15	28
Province FS	01	01	03	04	09
Districts FS	02	03	06	01	12
Province EC	00	00	01	03	04
Districts EC	00	00	02	05	07
Total	03	05	24	28	60
Percentage	5%	8.3%	40%	46.7%	100%

Discussion 1

The majority of participants were usually aware (40%) and very much aware (46.7%) of the existence of the WPF. Some participants were totally unaware of the existence of the WPF (5%) and 8.3% of participants were not really sure about the existence of the WPF or somewhat aware.

Research Statement 2

Being aware of the existence of the WPF does not directly mean knowing and/or understanding it. To further test the basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF, participants were asked about its launch.

Feedback 2: Knowledge of When the WPF Was Launched.

TABLE II
 LAUNCH OF THE WPF

Participants	Launch date (Month and Year)						Total
	Don't know	Prior 2013	2013	2013/2014	2014	After 2014	
National DSD	00	10	08	02	06	02	28
Province FS	03	01	00	00	04	01	09
Districts FS	10	00	01	00	01	00	12
Province EC	00	00	01	00	03	00	04
Districts EC	04	01	01	00	01	00	07
Total	17	12	11	02	15	03	60
Percentage	28.3%	20%	18.3%	3.3%	25%	5%	100%

Discussion 2

Almost 50% of the participants situate the launch of the WPF before it was finalized (June 2013). Two crucial implications are to be noted here. Firstly, some participants confused the WPF with the National Family Policy (NFP). In such case, their knowledge of the WPF was erroneous and therefore the implementation was jeopardised in the sense that they were implementing the NFP in the place of the WPF. Secondly, they did not know about the WPF at all, thus the implementation was not based on the right information. The fact of not knowing when the WPF was launched implies that participants did not know and understand it. It also implies that those who did not know about the launch of the WPF did also not implementing it. One participant from the FS Province linked the implementation of the WPF to its knowledge by the users by declaring that: “The implementation of the WPF can yield good results if the users know about it and implement it”.

Research Statement 3

The WPF has three specific objectives¹ which are interpreted through three strategic priorities: (1) promoting a healthy family life; (2) family strengthening; and (3) family preservation [4].

Participants were asked to state the three objectives of the WPF. The responses of participants were analysed to check whether they were similar to the three above objectives and to establish how many objectives each participant knew. The keywords for the analysis were: (1) enhancing socializing, caring, nurturing and supportive family for the development of the country (first objective); (2) empowering families and their members (second objective); and (3) improving capacity of families and their members for social interactions (third objective).

¹ The specific objectives of the WPF are: (1) Enhance the socializing, caring, nurturing and supporting capabilities of families so that their members are able to contribute effectively to the overall development of the country; (2) Empower families and their members by enabling them to identify, negotiate around, and maximize economic, labor market, and other opportunities available in the country; and (3) Improve the capacities of families and their members to establish social interactions which make a meaningful contribution towards a sense of community, social cohesion and national solidarity [4].

Feedback 3: Understanding of the Objectives of the WPF.

TABLE III
LAUNCH OF THE WPF

Participants	Number of objective (s) known				Total
	None	1	2	3	
National DSD	06	18	03	01	28
Province FS	02	05	02	00	09
Districts FS	03	08	01	00	12
Province EC	00	01	02	01	04
Districts EC	01	03	01	02	07
Total	12	35	09	04	60
Percentage	20%	58.3%	15%	6.7%	100%

Discussion 3

The extent of basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF was proven to be low as the majority of participants (78%) knew none or only one objective of the WPF. It was surprising that only 6.7% of participants knew the three objectives.

Research Statement 4

The vision of the WPF is: “Well-functioning families which are loving, peaceful, safe, stable, and economically self-sustaining, that also provides care and physical, emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual, and intellectual support for their members”. Participants’ knowledge of the WPF was tested through the keyword: “well-functioning families” [4]. The study considered that, to successfully implement the WPF, users needed to know and understand not only its objectives but also its vision, mission and guiding principles.

Feedback 4: Knowledge of the Vision of the WPF.

TABLE IV
VISION OF THE WPF

Participants	Number of guiding principles known		Total
	Don't know the vision	Know the vision	
National DSD	12	16	28
Province FS	05	04	09
Districts FS	08	04	12
Province EC	00	04	04
Districts EC	02	05	07
Total	27	33	60
Percentage	45%	55%	100%

Discussion 4

A slight majority of participants (55%) formulated the vision of the WPF considering the keywords used for the analysis.

Research Statement 5

The mission of the WPF is: “to undertake activities, programs, projects and plans to promote, support and nourish well-functioning families that are loving, peaceful, safe, stable, and economically self-sustaining that also provide care and physical, emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual, and intellectual support for their members” [4]. Feedbacks were analysed using the keywords: “activities, programs, projects, plans, achieve the vision”.

Feedback 5: Knowledge of the Mission of the WPF.

TABLE V
MISSION OF THE WPF

Participants	Number of guiding principles known		Total
	Don't know the Mission	Know the Mission	
National DSD	26	02	28
Province FS	07	02	09
Districts FS	11	01	12
Province EC	00	04	04
Districts EC	03	04	07
Total	47	13	60
Percentage	78.3%	21.7%	100%

Discussion 5

Although the slight majority knew the vision of the WPF, only 21% of the participants managed to formulate a correct mission of the WPF. It is correct to be doubtful about the capacity of a user to implement a policy without knowing its vision (45%) and/or not knowing its mission (78.3%).

Research Statement 6

The WPF is informed by seven principles which are supposed to be known and understood by its users. Participants were asked to only cite those seven without detailed explanation. The seven guiding principles of the WPF: (1) Human rights approach; (2) Family diversity; (3) Family resilience; (4) Community participation; (5) Promoting and strengthening marriages; (6) Promoting and strengthening responsible parenting; and (7) Strategic partnerships.

Feedback 6: Knowledge of the Guiding Principles of the WPF.

TABLE VI
GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE WPF

Participants	Number of guiding principles known							Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6		7
National DSD	16	02	03	01	03	02	00	01	28
Province FS	07	02	00	00	00	00	00	00	09
Districts FS	09	01	01	00	00	00	00	01	12
Province EC	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	04	04
Districts EC	00	00	00	00	00	05	01	01	07
Total	32	05	04	01	03	07	01	07	60
Percentage	53.3%	8.3%	6.7%	1.7%	5%	11.7%	1.7%	11.7%	100%

Discussion 6

The majority of participants (53%) were not able to cite a single guiding principle of the WPF whereas only 12% could cite all seven guiding principle. This finding deepened the low level of knowledge and understanding of the WPF by the social work managers and coordinators.

Research Statement 7

“The WPF contains recommended strategic priorities and envisaged actions by the DSD for the benefit of families”. Participants were asked to explain those recommended actions.

Feedback 7: Envisaged Actions for “Family Preservation”.

Discussion 7

The majority of participants (90%) were unable to provide

the correct actions envisaged for the recommended strategic priority 3 on “family preservation”. The other 10% who provided acceptable responses were not precise. It must be stressed that those actions are ambiguous and not easy to understand and memorise in order to guide the social work practitioner’s actions. A participant from the DSD National stated that: “The WPF provides a guide on the action not an exhaustive list. The aim is to assist the user in implementing programmes to deal with challenges in order to preserve families through counselling, conflict mediation”. A participant from FS Province declared that: “I cannot unpack the actions as I am not from the family unit”. This has been the understanding of many participants that only personnel from the family units had to know about the WPF.

TABLE VII
ENVISAGED ACTIONS FOR “FAMILY PRESERVATION”

Participants	Provided envisaged actions for:									
	Prevention		Early intervention		Statutory Intervention		Reunification & After Care		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
National DSD	00	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00	28
Province FS	00	09	00	09	00	09	00	09	00	09
Districts FS	01	11	01	11	01	11	01	11	01	11
Province EC	03	01	03	01	03	01	03	01	03	01
Districts EC	02	05	02	05	02	05	02	05	02	05
Total	06	54	06	54	06	54	06	54	06	54
Percentages	10%	90%	10%	90%	10%	90%	10%	90%	10%	90%

The feedbacks and discussions from the above seven research statements sufficiently prove that the majority of participants did not have a basic knowledge of the WPF or an understanding of its contents. This is contrary to the basic principle that, in order to successfully implement a policy, users need to have basic knowledge and understanding of the content and process of such policy.

B. Implementation Challenges of the WPF

Research Statement 8

“The study’s overall objective was to investigate basic knowledge of and challenges with the implementation of preventive and developmental social work in South Africa. Importantly, the research relates directly to the ongoing development and implementation of the White Paper on Families”. Participants were asked to discuss the challenges they experience in implementing the WPF, the extent of such challenges and to suggest some solutions in response to the statement that: “This study includes the identification of potentially innovative, solutions to the challenges experienced in the implementation of the WPF”.

Feedback 8: The Extent of Implementation Challenges of the WPF.

Discussion 8

The majority of participants who implement the WPF experienced challenges sometimes and frequently (73.3%),

26.6% did not experience any challenge or experienced challenges only occasionally. Following are the key challenges enumerated by participants including those who did not directly implement the WPF.

TABLE VIII
EXTENT OF IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Participants	Extent of challenges					Total
	No reply	Not at all	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	
National DSD	20	04	01	01	02	08
Province FS	05			01	03	04
Districts FS	04			02	06	08
Province EC			02		02	04
Districts EC	01		01	03	02	06
Total	30	04	04	07	15	30
Percentage	50%	13.3%	13.3%	23.3%	50%	100%

* Percentages discussed are calculated only for n=30

a. Training on the WPF

Research Statement 9

“Training or capacity building is essential in the implementation of the WPF. The DSD is mandated to train social workers in charge of the implementation of the WPF”. The task of the study was to establish how many participants received training on the WPF in any form.

Feedback 9: Number of Participants Trained on the WPF.

TABLE IX
TRAINING ON THE WPF

Participants	Trained	Not trained	Total
National DSD	05	23	28
Province FS	03	06	09
Districts FS	03	09	12
Province EC	03	01	04
Districts EC	04	03	07
Total	18	42	60
Percentages	30%	70%	100%

Discussion 9

Some participants were confused about the way training was done. If training is an action teaching/capacitating a person on a type of skill or behaviour; then it is particularly important to distinguish it from a workshop which could be considered as a meeting of a group of people to engage intensively in discussions and activities on a subject. Understanding the process used by the DSD in training participants on the WPF is therefore crucial. This includes using training schedules and curriculums. Differentiating the training of the trainers and the normal training was also critical. In total only 30% of the participants received a certain form of training on the WPF against 70% who justified their non-participation as a result of training not being taken seriously.

Research Statement 10

The frequency, the content as well as the importance of the training were critical to establish the relevance of training in

facilitating the implementation of the WPF. Following is the summary of the feedback from the 18 participants who were trained.

Feedback 10: Frequency of Training on the WPF.

TABLE X
 FREQUENCY OF TRAINING ON THE WPF

Participants	Frequency					Total
	Monthly	Every 3 months	Every 6 months	Once a year	Once off	
National DSD					05	05
Province FS					03	03
Districts FS				01	02	03
Province EC				01	02	03
Districts EC					04	04
Total				02	16	18
Percentages				11.1%	88.9%	100%

Discussion 10

Two participants were trained once each year (one participated twice and the other one thrice). The other 16 received the training once off only. Those who participated in training were of the view of that the frequency of training should depend on the demand from the provinces. They also suggested that training should be on-going or permanent especially for those who are directly implementing the WPF and that the roll-out plans and training manuals should be developed by DSD (SWM, National DSD).

Feedback 11: Content of the Training.

TABLE XI
 CONTENT OF TRAINING ON THE WPF

Participants	Content was:				Total
	Not sufficient	Fair	Sufficient	Too much	
National DSD	02		03		05
Province FS	01	01	01		03
Districts FS	01	01	01		03
Province EC	01		02		03
Districts EC		01	02	01	04
Total	05	03	09	01	18
Percentages	27.8%	16.7%	50%	5.5%	100%

Discussion 11

Although half of the participants felt that the content of the training was sufficient, a good proportion (27.8%) believed that more should have been done to improve on the content of the training.

Feedback 12: Importance of the Training on the WPF.

TABLE XII
 IMPORTANCE OF THE TRAINING ON THE WPF

Participants	Content was important:					Total
	Not	Fairly	Important	Very	Critical	
National DSD			05			05
Province FS	01		02			03
Districts FS			02		01	03
Province EC				03		03
Districts EC				03	01	04
Total	01		09	06	02	18
Percentages	5.6%		50%	33.3%	11.1%	100%

Discussion 12

The great majority of participants claimed that the training was important (50%), very important (33.3%) and critical (11.1%). A small minority felt that the training was not important because it did not provide enough knowledge for users to be able to implement the WPF according to a SWM from the FS Province.

b. Dedication to the Implementation of the WPF

Research Statement 13

“Dedication and time spent on the implementation of the WPF are critical for its success”. By dedication, this study meant social work managers who were assigned and committed to the implementation of the WPF as their major role, thus being supervised, monitored, evaluated and reporting on programmes and activities extracted directly from the WPF.

Feedback 13: Level of Dedication.

TABLE XIII
 LEVEL OF DEDICATION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WPF

Participants	Level of dedication				Total
	Not dedicated	Somewhat dedicated	Usually dedicated	Fully dedicated	
National DSD	12	12	02	02	28
Province FS	04	02	02	01	09
Districts FS	06	04	01	01	12
Province EC		01	02	01	04
Districts EC	01	01	01	04	07
Total	23	20	08	09	60
Percentages	38.3%	33.3%	13.3%	15%	100%

Discussion 13

The majority of the participants were either not dedicated or somewhat dedicated to the implementation of the WPF (71.3%). Only 13.3% of participants claimed that they were usually dedicated whereas 15% were fully dedicated. It is however important to stress that none of those dedicated had an official job description or task sheet related to the implementation of the WPF.

Those who claimed being not dedicated or somewhat dedicated believed that the WPF was the responsibility of only those in the family unit. Other thought that it was the work of only coordinators.

c. Resources Allocated to for Implement the WPF

Research Statement 13

“An allocated budget is important for the implementation of the WPF”. The section assesses the existence and size of a dedicated budget for the implementation of the WPF.

Feedback 13: Budget Allocated to the Implementation of the WPF.

Discussion 14

The majority of participants (76.7%) declared not having a budget allocated to the implementation of the WPF against only (23.3%) who were from the family unit.

TABLE XIV
BUDGET ALLOCATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WPF

Participants	Have allocated budget	Don't have allocated budget	Total
National DSD	03	25	28
Province FS	01	08	09
Districts FS	05	07	12
Province EC	02	02	04
Districts EC	03	04	07
Total	14	46	60
Percentage	23.3%	76.7%	100%

All participants were of the view that the budget was insufficient.

d. Implementation Strategy of the WPF

Research Statement 15

“The WPF provides (section 5) for coordination, implementation, monitoring & evaluation”. In this section the study investigated the understanding of the role of DSD officials in implementing the WPF, the collaboration with other departments and organizations and the way the supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the WPF are performed.

Participants were asked to explain the respective and separate roles of the national, provincial and district DSD in the implementation of the WPF.

Feedback 14: Understanding of the Role of DSD in Implementing the WPF.

TABLE XV
ROLE OF THE DSD IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WPF

Participants	Know role of DSD	Don't know role of DSD	Total
National DSD	20	08	28
Province FS	07	02	09
Districts FS	09	03	12
Province EC	04	00	04
Districts EC	07	00	07
Total	47	13	60
Percentages	78.3%	21.7%	100%

Discussion 15

The majority of participants knew the role of the DSD regarding the WPF without necessarily implementing it.

Feedback 16: Collaboration of Other Departments and Organisation.

Participants who implement the WPF at national level collaborated with some national government departments such as the departments of education, justice, health, national NGOs and other civil society organisations. The collaboration concerned mainly on their participation in the national family forums which unfortunately are not fully functional.

At provincial levels the DSD collaborates with government departments of education, justice, health and provincial NGOs funded by the DSD and participating in the provincial forum. It was however stressed that there are no proper family forums. In most instances the victim empowerment and child protection forums have joint seating that is considered as the

family forum.

At district level DSD collaborate with district offices of departments such as Education, Justice (courts) and health. Collaboration includes referrals on cases such as the Early Childhood Development for the department of Education and other ad-hoc campaigns with other departments.

Discussion 16

Participants felt that collaboration was not effective at all levels as many departments are not participating in the family forums and do not implement activities on the WPF. Collaborations with some government departments dependent on the DSD units according to participants, for instance the children unit will directly collaborate with the department of Education for ECD programmes or the adoption unit will collaborate with the department of Justice for adoption issues. It was stressed that there was no formal agreement on the involvement of other departments and organisations with regard to their participation and collaboration.

e. Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation

Research Statement 17

Supervision, monitoring and evaluation are very important in ensuring the effective implementation of the WPF. The participants were asked if they were supervised, monitored and evaluated on programmes and activities related to the WPF.

Feedback 17: Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation on the WPF.

TABLE XVI
SUPERVISION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE WPF

Participants	Supervised, monitored and evaluated on the WPF			Total
	Not	Somehow	Supervised	
National DSD	25		03	28
Province FS	08		01	09
Districts FS	07		05	12
Province EC	02		02	04
Districts EC	01	01	05	07
Total	43	01	16	60
Percentages	71.66%	1.66%	26.66%	100%

Discussion 17

The majority of participants (72.6) were not supervised monitored and evaluated on programmes and activities related to the implementation of the WPF on family.

At national level, only the three SWMs from the family unit were supervised, monitored and evaluated on issues relating to the implementation of the WPF. Participants from all other units were neither supervised, nor monitored and evaluated on the implementation of the WPF.

At provincial level, only SWMs from the family unit acknowledged being supervised, monitored and evaluated on programmes and activities related to the WPF. At district level a good number of participants were supervised, monitored and evaluated on programmes and activities related to the WPF.

It must also be stressed that participants mentioned using different tools such as Operational Plans, M&E Tools,

Annual/Quarterly/Monthly Performance Plans, and Portfolios of Achievements. However, templates of such documents were not available as most of the in-depth interviews were conducted telephonically.

IV. INTERPRETATION AND IMPLICATION OF THE FINDINGS

The participants' inputs were analysed and interpreted using the implementation research methodology through the assessment of the public policy outcome variables by [15] and the process implementation variables by [5]. The ideas embodied in innovative social programmes are not self-executing according to Petersilia as cited by [5]. This means that the implementation of policies is crucial and implementation research is therefore important in assessing not only the feasibility and sustainability of the policy as it is the case for this study but importantly, the impact of the implemented policy through different programmes (not the direct focus of this study). Reference [15] argues that implementation research is a scientific inquiry into questions concerning implementation or the act of fulfilling or carrying out an intention expressed in what is being implemented. The assessment of a policy implementation involves therefore investigating both the policy process and the policy outcomes according to [3]. These authors argue that it is useful to make the conceptual distinction between the policy process and the policy outcomes. A policy process which is the focus of this study, involves actions on behalf of the policy, whereas policy outcomes refer to the ultimate effect on the policy problem.

Reference [13] suggests that a successful policy implementation should adopt an iterative process consisting of transforming ideas or the policy into behaviour or social action. The social action is therefore the direct result of the policy process and a valuable input in assessing such policy. An iterative policy implementation process involves an ongoing implementation – evaluation – improvement scenario. Yet, the process that produced a policy and the understanding of such process and the policy itself are critical in determining and facilitating its successful implementation in order to achieve the expected transformation. In this section the study investigated the importance of basic knowledge and clear understanding of the WPF by participants as the consequence or not of its implementation using some “implementation outcomes variables” of [16]. The selected implementation outcome variables for this study were the accessibility, feasibility, fidelity, implementation costs, and sustainability.

A. Implementation Outcome Variables

Four implementation outcome variables were analysed in this study. They are the accessibility, the feasibility, the fidelity and the sustainability. These variables are explained below with reference to the study findings.

a. Acceptability

The acceptability of a policy refers to the perception among the policy stakeholders including the policy implementers, the managers, and the policy makers, that an intervention is agreeable [16]. The authors relate to the relative advantage

and the credibility of the policy too.

The relative advantage of the WPF was that it was the result of a socio-economic policy transformation that started from the 1992 White Paper for Social Welfare (WPSW) to the NFP and to the Green Paper which is now an officially approved White Paper on Family. It is important to observe that the WPF is too ambitious than being pragmatically implementable. The background to the WPF portrays its ambiguity in various ways. Firstly, based on the WPSW which was branded as an innovative reform of the welfare post-apartheid, the relative advantages of the WPF are not explained beyond the focus of the WPSW itself. According to [4], the WPSW “reaffirmed the country’s commitment to securing basic welfare and human rights, and focused on the family and its life cycle: children, youth and the aged. It outlines strategies to promote family life, as well as to strengthen families; and guides, through its developmental paradigm, the implementation of pro-family policies and services in the country”. At this stage, the WPF loose its importance because the WPSW is specific in addressing the same cause as the WPF. Not implementing the WPSW should therefore not be the opportunity to duplicate policies. Rather, implementing the WPSW could have solved the problem already identified leading to the development of the WPSW in the first place.

The credibility of the WPF is also considered as being at stake because its forerunner policies, namely the WPSW and the NFP did not address the cause that the WPF is committed to address. Two important issues could have addresses the credibility of the WPF. Firstly, the WPF should have been based on an impact assessment of the WPSW and the NFP as far as addressing family matters is concerned. Secondly, such review should have considered the evaluation of the programmes and systems implemented through the previous policies in order to either improve on such programs and systems or design a new system or strategy and not developing or replicating a new policy in the form of the WPF.

Perceptions on how the interventions of the WPF could have been agreeable by the policy makers and implementers and therefore benefit families were missed as demonstrated in this study:

- The participation of implementers in the policy design process was not maximised making its implementation impossible. Participants from national, provincial and district level did not recall being part of the development process of the WPF. This is an indication that policy makers and policy implementers did not collaborate in making the WPF an affair of all for its credibility.
- Although the majority of participants were aware of the existence of the WPF, almost 50% did not know its vision and guiding principles and almost 80% did not know its mission.
- The vision of the WPF is ambitious and its objectives are not practical, quantifiable and measurably achievable. The study shows that twenty percent of the participants did not know a single objective of the WPF and almost 60% knew only one out of the three objectives.

- The majority of participants were not dedicated to the implementation of the WPF (70%), yet the WPF is supposed to be implemented by all DSD units as well as other departments and non-governmental and civil society organisations. Of those committed more than 90% were not providing direct services to families at all levels.
- The WPF does not have any implementation strategy which determines what it is supposed to achieve, how and when. The WPF development process includes provincial and national consultation processes and the development of an inter-departmental implementation plan for the implementation of the WPF. This inter-departmental implementation plan was not accessible to the research team and no participant was aware of such document. At national, provincial and district DSD, there was no departmental, provincial and district implementation plans available.

b. Feasibility

Feasibility means the extent to which an intervention can be carried out in a particular setting or organisation [16]. The implementation of the WPF is not supported by a proper feasibility report which outlines the interventions to be carried out and the consequent organisational planning and structure. The DSD has no officially binding statements on the roles and responsibilities of each DSD unit as well as other departments and non-governmental and civil society role players. As a direct consequence, there is no proper reporting on the interventions by all those supposed to implement the policy. The feasibility of a policy can be measured by different factors. In the case of the WPF considering the seven guiding principles and the recommended actions for family preservation, the study shows that:

- Over 50% of participants did not know a single guiding principle of the WPF. Only 30% of participants knew between four and seven guiding principle.
- Almost all participants (90%) did not know the recommended actions for family preservation although many participants just knew that the WPF is about actions to promote healthy and well-functioning families.

c. Fidelity

Fidelity represents the degree to which an intervention was implemented as it was designed in an original protocol, plan, or policy. The authors mean the adherence, the delivery as intended, the integrity, the quality of programme delivery, the intensity or dosage of delivery [16]. The implementation of the WPF has been hampered by various issues. As far as fidelity is concerned, it is impossible to measure adherence when there is no enforcement, adherence and dedication to the implementation of the WPF at all levels.

Dedication and direct service provision to families are two separate notions. By dedication, this study alludes to having the WPF as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) or a Key Result Area (KRA) by all those who are intended to implement the WPF. The study shows that 70% of participants were either not dedicated or just somewhat dedicated to the

implementation of the WPF. This indicates that the implementation of the WPF was not enforced at national, provincial and district levels.

d. Sustainability

Sustainability is the extent to which an intervention is maintained or institutionalised in a given setting. Sustainability includes the maintenance, continuation, durability, institutionalisation, routinisation, integration and incorporation of the policy [16]. To be durable, continuous and institutionalised, a policy needs to have proper coordination, implementation, supervision and monitoring and evaluation structures. In the case of this study it was observed that:

- Close to 80% of participants knew the role of DSD at national, provincial and district levels with regard to the implementation of the WPF. The key role of DSD at all levels was, according to most participants, to coordinate, facilitate, fund and train implementers of the WPF.
- However, participants from other units of DSD were not aware of their roles and responsibilities in implementing the WPF. Participants believed that the WPF was meant to be used or implemented by the family unit alone.
- On collaboration, participants identified different government departments, non-governmental and civil society as key role players without explaining their roles and responsibilities besides participating in the family forums at national, provincial and district levels.
- Supervision and monitoring and evaluation are critical for the successful implementation of a policy. For the WPF, because of no commitment and dedication, the majority of participants (over 80%) were not supervised, monitored and evaluated on the implementation of the WPF. There were also no clear supervision and monitoring and evaluation tools available to trace the progress in the implementation of the WPF.

The above factors relate to the degree of the implementation or the conditions that should have been carefully considered in order to facilitate the successful implementation of the WPF. These factors not being carefully considered in the design process of the WPF, hindered its successful implementation.

The degree of the implementation factors can also be classified as the predictions of the success of the WPF. The success of a policy is associated with the realisation of prior positive predictions by its makers [17]. The author argues that prediction makes a policy and its subsequent implementation successful. Being able to predict what makes implementation successful should have helped not only policymakers to address social problems through better policies and regulations, as well as anticipate and plan for likely barriers [17], but importantly, facilitate the design of measurable indicators of success considering the evaluation and impact assessment of previous policies. Reference [17] is of the view that it is the predictive quality of a policy that is important. It is evident that the vision, objectives and guiding principles of the WPF are more ambitious and not expressing possibly achievable predictions as it was demonstrated through the

assessment of the degree of implementation factors.

The section below looks at the process implementation [5], which includes critical factors that could have saved the implementation of the WPF following the inattention to the degree of implementation factors in the design of the WPF. Such factors are explained below.

B. Process Implementation

Reference [5] argues that process implementation means putting new operating procedures in place to conduct training workshops, provide supervision, change information reporting forms, and so on. Process implementation includes the factors discussed below.

a. Information Sharing on the Policy to Be Implemented

According to [5], information is crucial in spreading clarities on the vision and mission statements, the objectives and the specific programmes of a policy to its users and beneficiaries. Information sharing also includes updating policy users and beneficiaries on the training and training roll out, the formal structures and systems of a policy, and the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the implementation of the policy among other things.

This study revealed a lack of appropriate information sharing prior to and during the launch and the subsequent implementation of the WPF, hampering its successful implementation:

Although the majority of participants were aware of the existence of the WPF (over 85%), only less than 20% knew when it was launched. This supposes a difficulty of the users to implement a policy of which they do not know the official launch.

The majority of respondents (58.3%) knew only one of the three objectives of the WPF, only 6.7% knew the 3 main objectives, and just over 20% knew two objectives. One in five respondents did not know a single objective of the WPF. These findings explain the impossibility of a successful implementation of the WPF when the majority of social work managers and coordinators do not know its objectives.

Although 55% of participants knew the vision of the WPF against 45% who did not know it, only around 22% knew its mission. It is clear that the implementation of the WPF was hampered by the lack of knowledge of its vision and mission by the users.

The guiding principles of the WPF were not known to participants. The majority of participants (53.3%) did not know a single guiding principle of the WPF against just almost 12% who knew all the seven guiding principles. It is evident that users could not implement a policy without knowing the guiding principles.

All the above findings show the impossibility of the participants to implement the WPF. It is crucial to highlight the lack of information sharing on the implementation of the WPF. The majority of participants did not know the roles and responsibilities of their respective units with regard to the implementation of the WPF. They believed that the WPF was the sole responsibility of the family unit of the DSD. This

means that the structures and systems of the WPF were not thoroughly developed and/or publicised to all users of the WPF. The roles and responsibilities of other units of the DSD are emphasised in the family-centred approach and the integrated service delivery model promoted by the DSD. The roles other government departments are also stipulated in the WPF. It is evident that these roles and responsibilities were not officially informed to the other DSD units.

b. Training

Training is important in not only unpacking the content of the policy but in capacitating users to effectively implement the WPF. In the case of the WPF, training was not properly provided as it was not based on a proper training curriculum and in most cases participants could not differentiate an information session with a workshop on the WPF or a proper training or an appropriate training of the trainer. Most participants were neither informed about training and training roll-out, nor trained at all. Only 30% of participants received training compared to 70% who were not trained.

c. Implementation Cost

Determining the incremental cost of the implementation strategy and the total cost of a policy implementation is crucial for its success [16]. The authors refer to critical issues such as the cost of the policy interventions with regards to services to be delivered in different settings. The DSD argues that the WPF is the result of the cost-out of the implementation by government departments [4]. However, the contrary was observed by this study as the majority of participants (76.7%) did not have an allocated budget for the implementation of the WPF. At national level only 3 out of 28 participants mentioned having a budget which was not sufficient. It was also revealed that a proper costing of the interventions (services, activities, training, etc.) was not conducted. For those districts that submitted budgets for family related interventions no budget was provided. In most cases where there was a budget for the implementation of the WPF, participants regretted that the budget for family related interventions was reduced by the DSD.

d. Implementation Strategies

Coordination, collaboration, supervision, monitoring & evaluation, and reporting are important for the successful implementation of any public policy as it is referred to in the WPF. This study assessed the understanding of the roles of the family unit of the DSD in the implementation of the WPF as well as its collaboration with other DSD units and other departments and organisations. Although the majority of the participants did not directly implement the WPF, they had an understanding of the overall role of the DSD, especially the coordination and leadership roles. However, other units of DSD believed it was the sole responsibility of the family unit to implement the WPF. As a consequence, all other DSD units did not have clear roles with regard to the implementation of the WPF.

To the questions on the separate roles of the national, provincial and district DSD and how supervision, monitoring

and evaluation, and reporting on programmes and activities related to the implementation of the WPF were done, the study found that there was no clear instruction from the DSD top management on the role to be played by all DSD units in implementing the WPF. It was however found that participants were aware of the roles to be played by other departments especially as part of different family forums that unfortunately were not operational at all levels. In many instances, participants admitted participating in different forums such as the victim empowerment forum where they collaborated with other departments.

On supervision, monitoring and evaluation and reporting, over 70% of participants admitted not being supervised, monitored and evaluated on the implementation of the WPF. They also acknowledged that there was no proper structure for reporting on programmes and activities implemented as part of the WPF. Some participants from the family units admitted being supervised, monitored and evaluated on the implementation of the WPF. However, they were sceptical about a proper implementation strategy to facilitate supervision, monitoring and evaluation as well as reporting.

C. Performance Implementation Assessment

The analysis and interpretation of the challenges experienced by the participants in the implementation of the WPF were undertaken using the performance implementation assessment. Performance implementation means assessing how design processes facilitated the successful implementation of the WPF. This study identified not only the challenges to the implementation of the WPF but also summarised the suggested solutions from those who implement and are meant to implement the WPF. The performance implementation assessment factors are a contribution of this study and should be applied in connivance to the detailed suggestions from the participants who have experienced those challenges and recommended consequent solutions.

Implementing a policy refers to the actual enacting of the solutions as proposed through the programmes, procedures, regulations, or practices using allocated structures, resources and processes. It is therefore evident that the success of implementation of the WPF was subjected to the various challenges as recorded in this report. There are various factors that impeded the proper and successful implementation of the WPF. Such factors can be classified as depending on whether the implementation assessment targets the effectiveness, the feasibility or the impact of the WPF as analysed in the previous section.

Informed by the literature and the implementation research methodology, contemporary researchers allude to various factors influencing policy implementation. Some of such factors are considered in the assessment of the implementation of the WPF as follow.

a. The “Three Criteria”

Reference [1] acknowledges that the successful implementation of a policy depends on three major criteria:

communication from the policy creator, interpretation by the users, and resources for the implementation. A policy needs therefore to be clearly communicated from the creator to the relevant users within the bureaucracy that has the power to enact the policy. It has been ascertained that such communication did not take place in the case of the WPF. This study shows that the absence of a clear communication from the policy process to its implementation has negatively affected the interpretation of the WPF by the users. The fact that different units of the DSD were confused that the WPF was the responsibility of the family unit alone, has hindered their participation in the implementation of the WPF. Reference [1] warns that policy implementation can further be complicated when policies are passed down to agencies without a great deal of direction. This was observed in the case of the WPF as the units of the DSD were not involved, trained and prepared to implement the WPF. For [1], implementation imposes a large amount of both direction and confusion in agencies that administer policies. In the case of this study, the DSD should carefully address the challenges related to direction, guidance and confusions that have jeopardised the implementation of the WPF. Another critical challenge is the availability of resources for the implementation of the WPF. Reference [1] argues that some scholars justify the above three concerns with policy implementation by the fact that new policy initiatives often fail to start or takes substantial time to be implemented. In some cases policies are not implemented at all. This conclusion of [1] is what unfortunately happened to the implementation of the WPF.

b. Institutional Structures and Governance

The challenges to the implementation of the WPF as explained by the participants and summarised through the three criteria [1] are critical and require a remedy as recommended in detail by the participants. However, to understand why such challenges occurred, a quick review of the institutional structures and the governance around the WPF is crucial. Reviewing theoretical perspectives on policy implementation, [2] argues that in implementing policies, it is critical to analyse institutional structures and governance in order to understand how government institutions interact with their external environment in the delivery of policies. Reference [17] is critical of the three approaches that influence the success or failure of policy implementation and emphasises the role of “street-level bureaucracy” promoted by Lipsky in 1969. The three approaches are the top-down approach, the bottom-up approach and the combination of the two approaches.

In his book titled “An Introduction to the Policy Process” Birkland explains that the top-down policy implementation approach is a chain which begins with a policy message sent from the top and followed down the chain [17]. The top-down policy implementation approach implies that the policy to be implemented contains goals that are clearly defined as well as related policy tools. Such policy is described by an authoritative statement, and those who designed such policy

are familiar with the capacity and commitment of the policy implementers [17]. The top-down policy implementation approach eventually fails because of obstacles such as a lack of consensus on goals to attain; a lack of cooperation in the implementation process or a refusal to implement at national and/or local levels; opposing interests; and unsatisfactory incentives and/or sanctions for implementation compliance. The analysis of the challenges as explained by the participants, the WPF seems to be a top-down policy which unfortunately lacked clear directives and total involvement of the policy implementers for its success.

The bottom-up approach relies heavily on the idea of backward mapping. It examines those on the street-level who implement the policy and then go up the policy chain [17]. This approach presumes that goals are not always explicit but ambitious and that they can be conflictual with existing policies at times. Similarly, those implementing policies at local level are allowed to bargain during implementation making policies to ultimately work through networks of various actors. Some shortcomings of this approach include, according to the author, overemphasis on local level power, negating a potential lack of resources, and an assumption that groups are active in participation. This model was not followed in the design and implementation of the WPF.

The third model discussed by the author was meant to overcome the failures of both the top-down and the bottom-up models. This model is referred to as "A Third Generation of Implementation Research". The model is the best model for describing implementation processes. The third combined model sees implementation as a process of negotiation and communication; the idea of sending messages between users being important to implementation success. Such model was also not applied in the case of the WPF.

The above review shows that the policy design and the implementation strategy of the WPF did not take into account institutional structures and governance issues for its successful implementation. It is therefore important to consider such important factor as well as the three criteria by [1] as key recommendations of this study.

Reference [9] argued that "policy implementation in the end comes down to the people who actually implement it". In the book titled: "Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services", [10] provides the analysis of front-line staff's behaviour in policy supply structures referring to them as "street-level bureaucrats". These public employees interact directly with citizens and therefore hold large discretion in executing their job. Teachers, police officers, general practitioners such as social workers in the case of this study are examples of street-level bureaucrats who are responsible for implementing public policies. However, these bureaucrats respond to citizens with insufficient information or have no time to make a decision. This has been observed in the implementation of the WPF from focus group discussions with social work practitioners in government and NGO sectors [12].

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The suggested solutions from the participants are all valid and important. Classifying them by order of importance is not possible as each challenge and the way of addressing it are unique. The contribution of this study is to summarise the suggested solution into three important themes. Those themes are the emphasis on the essence of the preventive and developmental social work and the family-centred approach [19]; the three criteria by [1] and the consideration of the institutional structures and governance by [17].

A. Preventive and Developmental Social Work and the Family-Centred Approach

Reference [19] emphasises the role of families in preventive and developmental social work programmes and support the ecological – development approach as a way to understand family processes within a family system perspective. They argue that family-centred interventions prevent problems in childhood and promote positive youth development. They refer to three critical categories of family-centred approach to strengthening families. The first category attempts to prevent problems whereas the second and the third categories provide services to those at risk or identified as having a problem. Those categories are the universal preventive interventions, the selective preventive interventions and the indicated preventive interventions.

Emphasising the importance of preventive and developmental social work, this study recognises the importance of the WPF. The study agrees with the promoters of the WPF that the family-centred approach is needed because it is the only way to understand and help a person by considering the interactions that person has with the members of the family and with the community.

B. Fixing the "Three Criteria"

The three criteria proposed by [1] are critical in facilitating the implementation of the WPF. The communication from the policy creator, the interpretation of the policy by the users, and the allocation of resources for the implementation of the policy lacked and negatively affected the implementation of the WPF. It is therefore imperative for these three criteria to be addressed by DSD.

Communicating to different structures about the existence and the importance of the WPF is crucial. The DSD needs to develop a communication strategy on the WPF. A multi-dimensional approach is recommended to ensure that all those who are interested by the WPF are reached. The communication strategy should include training on the WPF, clarity on its programmes, its users and their particular roles and the implementation strategy. Structures such as the Councils and Associations of Social Workers, community meetings, radio and TV programmes and other media can also be used.

A proper communication system will definitely enable a correct interpretation of the policy by the users and consequently facilitate its implementation. It is important at this stage to prepare abridged versions of the WPF responding

to its basic information but to the roles and responsibility of each particular users and the implementation strategy and process. A training manual is also an important tool to use to assure that the users have the correct interpretation of the WPF they need to implement.

The allocation of sufficient resources is crucial for the successful implementation of the WPF. The DSD needs to facilitate a proper costing, budgeting and allocation of resources for the implementation of the WPF. The costing should consider all direct and indirect costs related to the implementation of the WPF. Different costing and budgeting approach can be used such as activity-based or area-based (district).

C. Institutional Structures and Governance

In *Street-Level Bureaucracy*, [10] recognises the importance of street-level bureaucrats or public servants for any policy implementation. He argues that the relatively low-level public service employees labour under huge caseloads, ambiguous agency goals, and inadequate resources. When combined with substantial discretionary authority and the requirement to interpret policy on a case-by-case basis, the difference between government policy in theory and policy in practice can be substantial and troubling.

Focus group discussions with social work practitioners in the government and NGO sectors revealed that social work practitioners were neither involved in the development process of the WPF nor aware and trained [11]. It is therefore important for the promoters of the WPF to consider institutional structure and governance that prioritise the involvement of the policy implementers in order to enable their knowledge and understanding of the WPF and consequently facilitate its implementation.

Street-level bureaucrats face the core dilemma of supposed making decisions about people they work for on the basis of individual cases, yet the structure of their jobs makes this impossible [17]. The author further argues that the cumulative effect of street-level decisions made on the basis of routines and simplifications about clients can reroute the intended direction of policy, undermining citizens' expectations of even handed treatment. Issues such as caseloads, supervision, monitoring and evaluation and reporting mechanisms are among dilemmas identified by this study. Cooperation, collaboration, and coordination are therefore key for the successful implementation of the WPF. Reference [2] emphasises the role of a multi-actor implementation framework to facilitate policy implementation. In other words this author values the importance of cooperation among public agencies and between them and organised societal interests in policy implementation. The WPF was developed with emphasis on inter-governmental, inter-organisational and public participation. It is therefore crucial for the DSD to coordinate the efforts of all units with DSD, all government departments, civil society organisations and the community in understanding the WPF and their respective roles and responsibilities. The implementation of the WPF can only be possible if all role players are instructed and made responsible

and accountable for their roles and implementation. This should include dedication and proper monitoring and evaluation as well as reporting on specific programmes and activities to be implemented by each role player.

In essence, [2] correctly understands that a multi-actor implementation framework refers to the integrated framework that combines insights from theory on policy implementation, organisation, and governance. Such a framework is concerned with understanding the nature of interaction and exchange among organised policy stakeholders in the public sector, as well as those between public agencies and non-governmental organisations and private sector. The goal is to combine the analytical strengths of these three distinct but parallel analytical perspectives in order to understand better the policy implementation processes in complex, diverse and dynamic societies.

VI. LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBLE FURTHER RESEARCH

The "Family Observatory for Preventive and Developmental Social Work in South Africa: An Investigation of Implementation Challenges", is a new study with regards to the assessment of the South African WPF. This component of the study targeted the DSD as key informant beside the information collected through the literature review and three previous reviews of the WPF [7], [16] and [18]. Some limitations which can prompt new studies are worthy of mention:

- This study (on basic knowledge and implementation challenges of the WPF) targeted only officials from the DSD, yet other departments and organisations are also intended to implement the policy. It is therefore necessary to replicate the study with other departments, organisations that are supposed to implement the policy.
- The study was conducted only at national level and in two provinces. Extending or replicating the study in all other provinces is important.
- Costing and budgeting of all programmes and activities of the WPF did not happen. A separate national study on the costing and budgeting of the implementation of the WPF is essential.
- It is important to highlight that this study did not involve the beneficiaries of services, meaning families. An impact assessment of the WPF with beneficiaries (families) is therefore a potential subject for further research.
- Other critical areas such as supervision, monitoring and evaluation as well as reporting systems, human resources development and retention are also important and should form part of the agenda for further research.

VII. CONCLUSION

The WPF is an important policy that materialises the application of preventive and developmental social work in South Africa and the family-based approach. Its policy design and development approach has missed important dimensions that could have facilitated its implementation. It is however interesting and encouraging that, although some participants

were not aware or committed or officially dedicated to the implementation of the WPF, they were enthusiastic about its importance and expressed their willingness to support such initiative recognising its importance.

The findings on the knowledge and understanding of the WPF and on its implementation challenges have been recorded to assist the DSD to draft strategies that will facilitate the successful implementation of such an important policy. It is important to stress that, the WPF already having been passed, it is not too late to assure that a clear communication on the WPF by DSD to the implementers or users will facilitate its interpretation by them for its implementation. A proper costing, budgeting and allocation of sufficient resources will accompany institutional structures and governance for the implementation of the WPF.

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