Capital to Clinic: A resource for effective advocacy for policy implementation

Wanjiku Manguyu
Regional Advocacy and Policy Advisor
PATH
Outline

1. Background and our approach
2. Understanding policy implementation
3. Description of the Capital-to-Clinic (C2C) tool
4. Key learnings and considerations
Background and Approach
From Capital to Clinic: Empowering advocates for successful policy implementation

Background:

• Policies are only as effective as the extent to which they are implemented.

• Documented understanding of the barriers to successful health policy implementation:
  • lack of evidence-based planning,
  • inadequate political commitment and resources,
  • weak capacity of public institutions,
  • failure to include frontline workers and other key stakeholders in decision-making processes

• Existing tools and frameworks guide policy makers and/or program implementers, *rather than advocates.*

“Often policies are fit for purpose at the time they are developed — but as communities change, we need to be able to adapt and evolve to deliver the intervention and ensure a vibrant health system for all.”

Coceka Nogoduka (South African National AIDS Council), speaking at the first Capital to Clinic virtual forum
Our Approach

• Convened a technical advisory group (late 2019).

• Conducted a literature review of policy implementation frameworks and existing tools including:
  
  • USAID Policy Implementation Assessment Tool and,
  
  • Brinkerhoff and Crosby’s Policy Characteristics Checklist.

• Participatory and virtual consultative workshops (2020).

Outcome and Tools:

• Key takeaways from consultations and literature review informed a white paper report and;

• Development of a practical tool: Capital to Clinic - A resource for effective advocacy for policy implementation.
Understanding policy implementation
Key Questions

- How and why are some policies implemented better than others in similar contexts?
- What are key barriers and enablers to successful policy implementation?
- What are key contextual factors that affect policy implementation?
- What are key strategies that can be used to improve policy implementation?
THEORY

• “Policy-centered” perspective—takes a statute/law as the starting point

• Policymakers exercise control over the environment and the implementers through a series of mechanisms (Palumba and Calista 1990)

• Concerned with formal organizational structures (Paudel 2012)

CRITICISMS

• Overly focused on administration, ignores political factors (March and Saetren 1986)

• Ignores role of local lower level bureaucrats / service providers in policy implementation (Berman 1978)

Frameworks: the top-down model of policy implementation

Adapted from Mazmanian and Sabatier 1981
Frameworks: the bottom-up model of implementation

**THEORY**

- Understands effective policy implementation as decentralized through methods that respond to specific local context (ORS 2016)
- Street-level bureaucrats have substantial discretion in implementing policies—essential implementation actors (Lipsky 1980)
- Emphasis on role of local networks and strategic coalitions (Hull and Hjern 1981)

**CRITICISMS**

- Elected officials who are accountable to voters should exercise policy control, rather than bureaucrats who are not accountable to voters (Matland 1995)
- Overemphasizes the level of local autonomy (Matland 1995)

*Bottom-up frameworks align more closely with concepts and frameworks from implementation science.*
Capital to Clinic:
A resource for effective advocacy for policy implementation
Action checklist

Guidance for **both** advocates and decision-makers to support policy implementation.
ACTIONS FOR DECISION-MAKERS

• Identify stakeholders at all levels (national and sub-national) who will be responsible for leading policy implementation and ensure they are bought into the vision.

• Build broad support among other policymakers and technical officers within critical arms of government whose actions may have an impact on the proposed policy.

• Facilitate stakeholder dialogue with all who stand to benefit, or lose out, from successful implementation of the policy to anticipate opposition and build support.

ACTIONS FOR ADVOCATES

• Develop an advocacy strategy: identify decision-makers, influencers, and their key interests; opponents of the policy and obstacles; implementers of the policy; and other partners and champions.

• Package and share evidence from research, programming, and other experience/ knowledge gained from working with those impacted by the policy.

• Connect with academics, researchers, and technical partners to gather and generate evidence to build a broad support base for policy implementation.
Policy development

**ACTIONS FOR DECISION-MAKERS**

- Establish and lead a taskforce or technical working group responsible for policy development.

- Create opportunities for civil society, advocates, community groups, and sub-national stakeholders to provide input and feedback on the policy via public consultations, meetings, or other mechanisms.

- Develop a comprehensive costed implementation plan that includes dissemination, financing sources, stakeholder engagement, and clear targets and indicators to measure success.

- Review global normative guidance, best practices from other countries, and research to ensure policy is evidence based, feasible, and aligns with current and emerging trends.

- Engage stakeholders responsible for policy implementation in the design phase.

- Clearly define roles and responsibilities in policy implementation, especially delineating between national and sub-national.

**ACTIONS FOR ADVOCATES**

- **Participate** in the taskforce or technical working group responsible for policy development; **contribute technical knowledge** to shape policy content and the implementation plan.

- **Advocate** for a comprehensive costed implementation plan, to be **developed in parallel/as part of the policy**, that includes dissemination, training, human resource capacity, coordination mechanisms, data collection systems, financing, stakeholder engagement and feedback, and clear targets and indicators to measure success.

- **Support or lead landscaping efforts** to understand what other policies might need to be updated to align with the new policy.

- **Advocate with other ministries/divisions** to ensure they are poised to meet implementation needs.

- **Engage the media** to highlight the key gaps as part of the justification for the policy.
Policy adoption

ACTIONS FOR DECISION-MAKERS

• Raise visibility of the policy with relevant decision-making bodies to build support for adoption and sign off.

• Hold briefings with higher-level decisionmakers/gatekeepers on the value of the policy and its implications for the health sector to address potential questions and concerns.

• Build broad consensus for acceptance and sign off by relevant authorities at the national or sub-national level. Hold a formal launch event in collaboration with partners and policy stakeholders, if needed.

ACTIONS FOR ADVOCATES

• Advocate with high-level decision-makers for adoption and final sign off/approval.

• Develop advocacy briefs with clear calls to action for the adoption of the policy.

• Track statements of support from key decision-makers and implementers to support future advocacy.

• Participate in and/or support a formal launch of the policy. Engage the media, covering the policy signing and launch so that key stakeholders are aware of the policy change.
Resource allocation

## ACTIONS FOR DECISION-MAKERS

- If needed, use enacted policy as a political tool to advocate for resources.

- Fulfill commitments made in the costed implementation plan.

- Create an enabling environment for civil society to participate in budget processes and bring community voices to inform budget priorities.

- Where opportunities exist, ringfence and safeguard resource allocations for a policy intervention. This could include enacting laws that create dedicated budget lines and/or allocate a specific amount toward a cause.

## ACTIONS FOR ADVOCATES

- Participate in and influence resource allocation processes across the budget cycle.

- Leverage the costed implementation plan as a tool to secure funding from government, international and local partners, etc. Monitor resource allocation, disbursement, and expenditure—highlighting gaps for further advocacy as well as celebrating milestones.

- Strengthen the capacity of civil society and community groups to engage in financing and accountability for the budget-making process. Incorporate community feedback to inform budget asks.

- Produce and disseminate simplified versions of the budget to increase public understanding and gather feedback on budget priorities.
Policy implementation

ACTIONS FOR DECISION-MAKERS

• Disseminate the policy according to the implementation plan.
• Engage high-level influential champions - popularize the policy and sustain momentum for implementation.
• Engage and consult with key community leaders to encourage buy-in and gain insight on local context and need for adaptations.
• Provide guidance and continuous education to health managers and health workers at sub-national levels.
• Facilitate peer-to-peer practical knowledge and experience exchange between implementing actors.
• Update pre- and in-service training curricula for health workers to support their new roles.
• Establish coordination mechanisms between government, implementing partners, private sector, professional associations, and civil society.
• Update data collection systems (i.e. health management information systems or logistics management information systems) needed to track policy implementation.
• Continue to ensure resources are allocated and disbursed to support implementation.

ACTIONS FOR ADVOCATES

• **Support policy dissemination**, including media activities, and help government track which audiences have not yet been reached.
• Engage with decision-makers and policy implementers to ensure **accountability for sustained action**.
• **Educate** local advocates, patient groups, citizens’ organizations, and media on the policy and equip them with tools to monitor policy implementation.
• **Support sub-national needs** for policy adaption/domestication by gathering information about how well a policy is being implemented and elevating documented gaps/needs at sub-national levels to national decision-makers.
• **Document commitments** made by decision-makers (through meetings, media coverage, etc.) to support accountability efforts.
• Continue to engage in **budget advocacy** to ensure adequate resourcing.
• **Build the capacity of coalitions** to support the implementation of the policy.
ACTIONS FOR DECISION-MAKERS

• Support or establish and strengthen community monitoring and evaluation and feedback mechanisms for frontline providers and communities to improve policies.

• Establish an evaluative culture within the health system and strengthen use of data to monitor and evaluate policy implementation.

• Involve key stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating policy implementation/ interventions.

• Use evaluation feedback to improve policy and respond to any identified gaps.

ACTIONS FOR ADVOCATES

• Participate in monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation. This may be a formal process led by decision-makers, and/or monitoring activities developed and led by civil society (e.g. score cards, citizen report cards, facility assessments, community advocacy forums).

• Document and share experiences and gaps in policy implementation; provide recommendations for improvement.

• Leverage this feedback to identify needs for future policy revisions or amendments.

• Engage the media as an accountability partner to highlight the successes and gaps.
Considerations
Considerations when using this resource

• A policy must be fit for purpose and fit for context.

• Policies vary widely based on the complexity of the problem they seek to address.

• Policy development is an inherently political process.

• Approaches to policy implementation have traditionally been categorized as top-down or bottom-up.

• Each national and subnational context is different, making it difficult to create a generic policy implementation framework.

• A policy can be updated even as it is being implemented.

• The COVID-19 pandemic taught us that the process of policy development and implementation must be adaptable.
For more information contact:

advocacyandpolicy@path.org

PATH’s Advocacy Resource Hub