

# **The Family Observatory for Preventive and Developmental Social Work: A Qualitative Investigation into the Challenges regarding the Implementation of the White Paper on Families in South Africa among Social Work Managers in the Public Sector**

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*Paulin Mbecke, Frikkie Booysen, Amanda de Gouveia*

## ***Abstract***

Despite a host of socio-economic programmes and pro-poor policies and legislations, the role of the government in the tangible alleviation of poverty, and the improvement and sustainability of the quality of people’s lives remains a “work in progress” twenty-two years after the dawn of democracy in South Africa. This study assessed 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. It investigates the level of basic knowledge and understanding, as well as the challenges involved in the implementation of the White Paper on Families, as causes of its failure. The study emphasises the importance of the family-centred approach in the implementation of pro-poor policies. This report is the result of a qualitative implementation research theory facilitated by means of in-depth interviews with social work managers, and is complemented by literature and policy review techniques. The report suggests that the Department of Social Development needs to take stock of and address the identified challenges with regard to the implementation of the White Paper on Families and, at the same time, facilitate a clear understanding thereof by its potential and current users. If successfully implemented, the White Paper on Families can foster positive family well-being that will contribute directly to the overall socio-economic development of South Africa.

## ***Keywords***

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



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The study on the Family Observatory for Preventive and Developmental Social Work and the Qualitative Investigation into the Challenges regarding the Implementation of the White Paper on Families in South Africa among Social Work Managers in the Public Sector was funded by the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development II (PSPPD II), an initiative between the Presidency and the European Union. The research report summarised as follows.

### **Introduction**

The study is based on two critical principles embodied in the White Paper on Families in South Africa (WPF): (1) the South African vision that family life strengthens men, women and children, as emphasised in the National Development Plan; and (2) the first point of the “Ten Point Plan” of the Department of Social Development (DSD), emphasising the rebuilding of family, community and social relations in order to promote social integration. The study partly attributes the persistence of poverty, unemployment, HIV and AIDS, crime and violence, alcohol abuse and other social ills, especially in poor and vulnerable communities, to the failure of the WPF due to: (1) the WPF which is unknown, and is neither understood nor correctly implemented by its users; and (2) the WPF faces various challenges regarding implementation as discussed in this report. The study’s hypothesis is that the success of the WPF depends on a clear understanding thereof by its users, as well as the use of an appropriate implementation strategy. The aim of the study was therefore to investigate the knowledge and understanding of the WPF by its users, and to assess the challenges they face in terms of its implementation. The study recommended that the three criteria, as well as the institutional structures and governance be considered to facilitate the successful implementation of the WPF.

### **Methodology**

The study was undertaken by means of the following methodology:

- a. The public policy implementation research method, using the approach to policy implementation by DeGroff and Cargo (2009), reflects a complex change process in which government decisions are transformed into programmes, procedures, regulations,

- or practices aimed at social betterment (the vision, mission, objectives and programmes or actions of the WPF);
- b. The participative research process whereby change is usually easier to achieve when those affected are directly involved in the study (social work managers in all DSD directorates at national, provincial and district levels);
  - c. The purposive sampling strategy: participants for the interviews were selected based on the purpose of the study (basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF, as well as its challenges with regard to implementation);
  - d. The data collection strategy: qualitative data was obtained by means of in-depth, face-to-face and telephonic interviews conducted between April and June 2016, using semi-structured questions;
  - e. Data analysis and interpretation: qualitative data analysis was done by means of an integrated comparative data process and a review of the literature;
  - f. Participants: 60 social work managers/co-ordinators from the national DSD and the Free State and Eastern Cape provincial and district DSD offices; and
  - g. Participants were selected based on the fact that they were social work managers at national DSD, Free State and Eastern Cape DSD offices.

### **Research Findings**

- a. Basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF by participants: the majority of the participants were aware of the existence of the WPF (87%). However, most did not know exactly when it was launched (over 80%); the majority did not know more than one out of the three objectives of the WPF (almost 80%). More than half of the participants (55%) knew the vision of the WPF but only 22% knew its mission; only 25% knew between five and seven guiding principles, and only ten knew the envisaged actions for family preservation.
- b. Challenges with regard to implementation (extent of experiencing challenges: 23% experienced challenges sometimes; and 50% frequently) included:
  - (1) Training: 70% did not receive training; training frequency: only once-off (89%); content of training: sufficient (50%); importance of training: important (50%), very important (33%) and critical (11%).
  - (2) Dedication to the implementation of the WPF: 38% were not dedicated to the implementation of the WPF, whereas 33% were somewhat dedicated.

(3) Resource allocation for implementation: 77% had no allocated budget to implement the WPF.

(4) Implementation Strategy of the WPF: the role of the DSD was known (78%); collaboration was not facilitated and there were no proper forums; 72% of those implementing the WPF were not supervised, monitored or evaluated.

### **Interpretation and Implication of the Findings**

- a. Implementation outcomes variables: the WPF was inaccessible as its vision was too ambitious and its objectives impractical, unquantifiable and immeasurable. The WPF was neither the product of a feasibility study nor was it a binding policy on roles and responsibilities. The fidelity could not be verified with regard to the way in which the WPF had been implemented as designed and planned. It was not proven to be sustainable as it was not institutionalised, had no proper co-ordination, implementation strategy or other important structures.
- b. Process implementation was dominated by poor information sharing on the WPF; no priority was given to training, implementation costing or budgeting and allocation of implementation resources. There was also no implementation strategy for the WPF.

### **Research Recommendations**

This study provides three key recommendations based on the level of the understanding of the WPF by the participants, the challenges they experienced and the solutions they suggested, as well as the inputs from the literature review. The recommendations are:

- a. The importance of the preventive and developmental social work and the family-centred approach in which Thomlison and Thomlison (2012) emphasise the role of families in social work programmes and support the ecological-development approach as a way of understanding family processes within a family system perspective. The WPF is an important policy to facilitate such an approach.
- b. In order to contribute to the effective implementation of the WPF, the three criteria specified by Boundless (2006) are important. These include: (1) the need for a communication strategy for information sharing on the WPF; (2) proper training on the WPF; and (3) costing, budgeting and allocation of resources for the implementation of the WPF.

- c. Focus on institutional structures and governance for the implementation of the WPF by emphasising the importance of “street-level bureaucrats” or social workers. They need to be involved in the policy process, and assisted in the implementation thereof through an appropriate co-operation, collaboration and co-ordination system. The active involvement of all role-players, as well as the consultation and participation of families and the community at large are crucial to the success of the WPF through a multi-actor implementation or integrated framework.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study views the WPF as an important policy that can affect preventive and developmental social work in South Africa and the family-based approach. Although the policy design and implementation process missed important dimensions that could have facilitated the success of the WPF, participants are enthusiastic about its importance and expressed their willingness to support it. The key recommendations provided by this study can therefore facilitate the effective and successful implementation of the WPF.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 2030 vision for South Africa “Our Future – Make it Work” as set out in the National Development Plan strives to ensure that “*family life strengthens women, men and children*”. Similarly, the first point in the “Ten Point Plan’ of the Department of Social Development (DSD) 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 was viewed as appropriate in alleviating poverty and redressing the imbalances of the past, families meant to be at the centre of development still face crises such as poverty, unemployment, HIV and AIDS, crime, violence and alcohol abuse on a daily basis, especially in poor and vulnerable communities. The persistence of such crises is partly due to the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the WPF which is unknown, and is neither understood nor correctly implemented by its users. The WPF also faces various challenges with regard to its implementation as discussed in this report.

This study understands a “white paper” as a document that is used as a means of presenting government policy preferences prior to the introduction of legislation. The publication of a white paper serves therefore to test the climate of public opinion regarding a policy issue, and enables the government to gauge its probable impact according to the Department of Social Development (2013). Testing the climate before the introduction of legislation requires an appropriate mechanism to facilitate the implementation of the policy at hand. Thus, the hypotheses of this study are, first and foremost, the understanding of a policy by its users and, secondly, a policy implementation strategy as a precondition for its success.

This study employed a qualitative implementation research methodology within a participatory process through in-depth interviews, complemented by a literature and policy review. The respondents included social work managers from the DSD at national level as well as in the Free State and Eastern Cape provincial and district levels. The study identified implementation outcomes and process implementation variables to summarise the knowledge and understanding of the WPF by participants. It also used the three criteria specified by Boundless (2006) in the performance implementation approach, and the analysis of the institutional structures and governance approach in investigating the challenges with regard to implementation of the WPF.

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

The four key objectives of the study were: (1) to assess 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 identify the challenges participants face with regard to the implementation of the WPF; and (4) to suggest potentially innovative solutions to the challenges experienced with regard to the implementation of the WPF.

The study found that the WPF was not understood by the users and had therefore not been properly implemented. However, it emphasised the importance of the WPF in supporting preventive and developmental social work programmes through a family-centred approach. Thus, the study recommended that the three criteria and the institutional structures and governance be considered to facilitate the successful and impactful implementation of the WPF.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This study employed the implementation research theory within a participatory process. “Implementation” is a specified set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or a programme of known dimensions (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman & Wallace, 2005: 4). An important goal of implementation research, as is the case in this study, is to “understand the factors that impede or promote effective implementation” (*ibid*, 2005: 4). Implementation research attempts to solve a wide range of problems with regard to implementation (Peters, Adam, Alonge, Agyepong & Tran, 2013: 1) as is the case in the implementation of the WPF.

### **A. Research Method: 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 (Boundless,

2016). It is appropriate to argue that a public policy is a set of solutions developed by an authorised body and, eventually, a government institution, to address an identified and analysed matter of public concern (Boundless, 2016).

A White Paper is a more refined discussion document, which is a broad statement of government policy (Gumede, 2008: 12). In principle, white papers are initiated by government departments (as is the case with the DSD for the WPF). Alternatively, they can be drafted by a task team designated by government ministers of departments. The WPF views the family as a key development imperative and seeks to mainstream family issues into government-wide, policy-making initiatives in order to foster positive family well-being and overall socio-economic development in the country argues the Department of Social Development (2013). 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 (Department of Social Development, 2013).

The WPF is therefore a public policy by means of which the government undertook to improve the socio-economic conditions of families and the entire society in general.

The implementation of a public policy refers to the process of transforming an idea of a department from a refined concept into a reality. Policy implementation can be defined as the stage during which government executes an adopted policy as specified by the legislation or policy action. At policy implementation stage, various government agencies and departments responsible for the respective area of policy are formally made responsible for implementation according to Theodoulou & Kofinis (2004) as cited by Micallef-Trigona (2014). The DSD is therefore the Department responsible for the implementation of the WPF.

Citing Lester and Goggin (1998), DeGroff and Cargo (2009) view implementation as a distinct stage in the policy process that is concerned with the transformation of a policy idea or expectation into action aimed at remedying social problems. The approach to policy implementation by DeGroff and Cargo (2009) was adopted in this study. For these authors, policy implementation reflects a complex change process in which government decisions are transformed into programmes, procedures, regulations, or practices aimed at social betterment as are the overall vision, mission, objectives and programmes or actions of the

WPF. The participants' understanding of the vision, mission, objectives and programmes of the WPF is therefore critical to the successful implementation thereof.

## **B. Research Process**

By adopting a participative process, this study showed 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 managers in all directorates at DSD national and social work managers and some co-ordinators at the Free State and Eastern Cape provincial and district levels. According to Peter et al. (2013: 1), implementation research is especially concerned with the users of the policy rather than purely with the production of knowledge. In this study, and as suggested by these authors, such users included social work managers and programme co-ordinators who are supposedly responsible for the implementation of the WPF.

## **C. Sampling Strategy**

A “purposive sampling” strategy was used during the study. Purposive sampling or judgmental, selective or subjective sampling is a type of non-probability sampling technique. Non-probability sampling focuses on techniques in which the units under investigation are based on the judgement of the researcher and the purpose of the study. Through this sampling strategy, participants were selected based on the purpose of the study, namely to assess the basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF and to identify the challenges with regard to its implementation. Participants were selected due to their being social work managers at national DSD or at Free State and Eastern Cape provincial and districts levels of DSD.

## **D. Data Collection Strategy**

The data was collected by means of two main techniques: in-depth interviews with the participants, and policy (WPF) and literature review on issues related to the WPF.

The in-depth interviews were conducted between April and June 2016 after the granting of the “Ethical Clearance” by the University of the Free State and the approval of the study from the national DSD. The interview technique provides insight into people's experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings according to Cohen, Manion, & Marrison (2007). In the case of this study, the in-depth interviews (face-to-face and telephonic) included semi-structured questions to allow for comparisons between the views held by different

participants, and 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 sufficient structure to allow for some comparability of answers, and gave the researcher more control over the interview process.

### **E. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The data collected from the in-depth interviews was qualitative. Qualitative data analysis was therefore necessary to address the aim of the study, namely to assess the participants' basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF and to identify the challenges they encounter in terms of its implementation. Consequently, this qualitative data analysis facilitated the formulation of recommendations with regard to the successful implementation of 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 according to different themes based on the implementation research methodology.

### **F. Participants**

The in-depth interviews were conducted in three different sites: the national DSD, the DSD Free State Province and the DSD Eastern Cape Province. A total of sixty (60) social work managers participated in the study, three of whom were co-ordinators for the family unit – one at national level and two at provincial level.

## **3. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The findings below are discussed in response to the four key objectives of the study: (1) to assess the participants' basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF; (2) to recommend ways of facilitating the basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF; (3) to identify the challenges participants face with regard to the implementation of the WPF; and (4) to suggest potentially innovative solutions to the challenges experienced with regard to the implementation of the WPF.

### **A. Basic Knowledge and Understanding of the WPF**

In order to investigate the challenges with regard to the implementation of the WPF, the participants' basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF was tested by means of seven research statements, feedbacks and discussions as follow:

*Research statement 1:*

“The first point in the DSD’s “Ten Point Plan” focuses on “rebuilding family, community and social relations to promote social integration”, a vision embodied in the country’s WPF” (Department of Social Development, 2013). Participants were asked whether they were aware of the existence of the WPF.

*Feedback 1: Awareness of the existence of the WPF*

**Table 1: Awareness of the existence the WPF**

Participants	Level of awareness of the existence of the 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%

*Discussion1:*

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

*Research Statement 2:*

Being aware of the existence of the WPF does not necessarily directly imply that the participants knew and/or understood it. To further test their basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF, participants were asked about the launching thereof.

*Feedback 2: Knowledge of when the WPF was launched*

**Table 2: Launch of the WPF**

Participants	Launch date (Month and Year)						Total
	Don't know	Before 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 launching of the WPF before it was finalised (June 2013). Two crucial implications are to be noted here. Firstly, some participants confused the WPF with the National Family Policy (NFP). In this case, their knowledge of the WPF was erroneous and therefore the implementation thereof jeopardised in the sense that they were implementing the NFP instead of the WPF. Secondly, they did not know about the WPF at all. Thus the implementation thereof was not based on the correct information. The fact that they did not know when the WPF had been launched implies that the participants neither knew nor understood it. Furthermore, this suggests that those who did not know about the launch of the WPF also failed to implement it. One participant from the FS Province linked the implementation of the WPF to the users' knowledge thereof by declaring that: *“The implementation of the WPF can yield good results if users know about it and how to implement it”*.

*Research Statement 3:*

The WPF has three specific objectives: (1) to enhance the socialising, caring, nurturing and supporting capabilities of families so that their members are able to contribute effectively to the overall development of the country; (2) to empower families and their members by enabling them to identify, negotiate around, and maximise economic, labour market, and other opportunities available in the country; and (3) to 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 (Department of Social Development, 2013).

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

*Feedback 3: Understanding of the objectives of the WPF*

**Table 3: Launch of the WPF**

Participants	Number of objective(s) known				
	None	1	2	3	Total
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 the participants' basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF was proven to be low as the majority of the participants (78%) knew none or only one objective of the WPF. It was surprising that only 6.7% of the participants knew the three objectives of the WPF.

*Research Statement 4:*

The vision of the WPF is: "Well-functioning families which 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" (Department of Social Development, 2013). Participants were asked to state the vision of the WPF.

The participants' knowledge of the vision of the WPF was tested by means of the keyword: "well-functioning families". The study considered that, in order to successfully implement

the WPF, users needed to know and understand not only its objectives but also its vision, mission and principles.

*Feedback 4: Knowledge of the vision of the WPF*

**Table 4: Vision of the WPF**

Participants	Don't know the vision	Know the vision	Total
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 the participants (55%) were able to formulate the vision of the WPF while considering the keywords used for the analysis.

*Research Statement 5:*

The mission of the WPF is: “to undertake activities, programmes, 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” (Department of Social Development, 2013). Participants were asked to state the mission of the WPF.

The participants’ knowledge of the mission of the WPF was tested by means of the keywords: “activities, programmes, projects, plans, achieve the vision”.

*Feedback 5: Knowledge of the mission of the WPF*

**Table 5: Mission of the WPF**

Participants	Don't know the Mission	Know the Mission	Total
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 were familiar with the vision of the WPF, only 21% of the participants managed to formulate its mission correctly. It is natural to doubt the capacity of a user to implement a policy when he/she is unfamiliar with its vision (45%) and/or mission (78.3%).

*Research Statement 6:*

The WPF is informed by seven principles which are supposed to be known and understood by its users. The participants were asked to cite only those seven principles, without having to provide their detailed explanation. The seven guiding principles of the WPF were: (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 6: 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 the participants (53%) were unable to cite a single guiding principle of the WPF, whereas only 12% were able to cite all seven. This finding confirmed the low level of knowledge and understanding of the WPF by the social work managers and co-ordinators.

*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”*

**Table 7: 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%

*Discussion 7:*

The majority of the participants (90%) were unable to provide the correct actions envisaged for the recommended strategic priority three on “family preservation”. The other 10% provided acceptable but not precise responses. It must be stressed that those actions are ambiguous and are not easy to understand or memorise in order to guide the social work practitioner’s actions. A participant from the National DSD 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 and conflict mediation”*. A participant from the FS Province declared that *“I cannot unpack the actions as I am not from the family unit”*. Many participants claimed and were convinced that only personnel from the family units had to know about and implement the WPF.

The feedback and discussions based on the seven research statements specified above sufficiently prove that the majority of the participants neither had a basic knowledge of the WPF nor an understanding of its contents. This is contrary to the basic principle that, in order to effectively and efficiently implement a policy, users need to have a basic knowledge and understanding of the content and process of such a policy.

## **B. Challenges with regard to the implementation of the WPF**

In order to identify the challenges with regard to the implementation of the WPF, the study focus on ten (10) key areas. The following 10 research statements (8 – 17) with their respective 10 feedbacks and 10 discussions assisted in identifying the challenges experienced in the implementation of the WPF:

### *Research Statement 8:*

*“The study’s overall objective was to conduct an investigation into the basic knowledge and challenges with regard to 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”.*

The participants were asked to discuss the challenges they experience in implementing the WPF, as well as the extent of such challenges, and to suggest a number of 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 the challenges with regard to the implementation of the WPF

**Table 8: Extent of the Challenges Regarding the Implementation of the WPF**

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

*Discussion 8:*

The majority of the participants who implement the WPF experienced challenges either sometimes or frequently (73.3%), whereas 26.6% either did not experience any challenges or only experienced them occasionally. Following are the key challenges enumerated by those who implemented the WPF (including some who did not directly implement it).

***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 this study was to establish the number of participants who received training on the WPF in any form.*

*Feedback 9:* Number of participants trained on the WPF

**Table 9: 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 in which training had been conducted. If training refers to an action that teaches/capacitates a person on a type of skill or behaviour, then it is very 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 curricula. Differentiating between the

training of the trainers and normal training was also critical. In total, only 30% of the participants received a certain form of training on the WPF as opposed to 70% who justified their non-participation as a result of training not being taken seriously.

*Research Statement 10:*

The frequency of the training was critical in establishing the relevance thereof in facilitating the implementation of the WPF. Following is the summary of the feedback obtained from the eighteen participants who had been trained.

*Feedback 10: Frequency of Training on the WPF*

**Table 10: Frequency of Training on the WPF**

Participants	Frequency					
	Monthly	Every 3 months	Every 6 months	Once a year	Once-off	Total
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 had been trained on the WPF once a year (one participated twice and the other thrice). The other sixteen had received training on the WPF once only. Those who had participated in training were of the opinion that the frequency thereof should depend on the demand for it made by the provinces. They also suggested that training should be on-going or permanent, especially for those who are responsible for directly implementing the WPF, and that their roll-out plans and training manuals should be developed by the DSD according to a SWM at national DSD.

*Research Statement 11:*

The content of the training was critical in establishing the relevance thereof in facilitating the implementation of the WPF. Following is the summary of the feedback obtained from the eighteen participants who had been trained.

*Feedback 11: Content of the training*

**Table 11: Content of Training on the WPF**

Participants	Content				
	Not sufficient	Fair	Sufficient	Too much	Total
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 had been sufficient, a good proportion (27.8%) believed that more should have been done to improve it.

*Research Statement 12:*

The importance of the training was critical in establishing the relevance thereof in facilitating the implementation of the WPF. Following is the summary of the feedback obtained from the eighteen participants who had been trained.

*Feedback 12: Importance of the Training on the WPF*

**Table 12: Importance of the Training on the WPF**

Participants	Content was important:					
	Not	Fairly	Important	Very	Critical	Total
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 majority of the participants claimed that the training was important (50%), very important (33.3%) or critical (11.1%). The minority, however, were of the opinion that the training was unimportant as it did not provide the users with sufficient knowledge to enable them to implement the WPF according to an SWM from the FS Province.

***b. Dedication to the Implementation of the WPF***

*Research Statement 13:*

*“Dedication to and time spent on the implementation of the WPF are critical to its success”.*

In the context of this study, dedication refers to social work managers who were assigned and committed to the implementation of the WPF as their major role, and who were thus responsible for supervising, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on programmes and activities extracted directly from the WPF.

*Feedback 13:* Level of dedication

**Table 13: Level of Dedication to the Implementation of the WPF**

Participants	Level of dedication				
	Not dedicated	Somewhat dedicated	Usually dedicated	Fully dedicated	Total
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 (71.3%). Only 13.3% of the participants claimed that they were usually dedicated, while 15% said that they were fully dedicated. It is, however, important to emphasise that none of those who claimed to be dedicated had an official job description or task sheet related to the implementation of the WPF. Those who claimed that they were not dedicated or somewhat dedicated believed that the WPF was solely the responsibility of those in the family unit, while others thought that it was the work of the co-ordinators.

***c. Resources Allocated to the Implementation of the WPF***

*Research Statement 14:*

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

*Feedback 14:* Budget allocated to the implementation of the WPF

**Table 14: 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%

*Discussion 14:*

The majority of the participants (76.7%) declared that no budget had been allocated to the implementation of the WPF, while those from the family unit claimed the opposite (23.3%). All participants, however, were of the view that the budget was insufficient.

***d. Implementation Strategy of the WPF***

*Research Statement 15:*

*“The WPF provides (section 5) for co-ordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation”*. In this section, the study investigated the participants’ understanding of the role of DSD officials in implementing the WPF. Participants were asked to explain the respective and separate roles of the DSD at national, provincial and district levels in the implementation of the WPF.

*Feedback 15: Understanding of the role of DSD in implementing the WPF*

**Table 15: The 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 the participants understood the role of the DSD regarding the WPF, without necessarily having to implement it.

*Research Statement 16:*

*“The WPF provides (section 5) for co-ordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation”*. In this section, the study investigated the participants’ understanding of their collaboration with other departments and organisations in implementing the WPF. Participants were asked to explain how they collaborate with other departments and organisations.

*Feedback 16: Collaboration with other departments and organisations*

Participants who implement the WPF at national level claimed to collaborate with a number of national government departments such as the Departments of Education, Justice and Health, as well as national NGOs and other civil society organisations. The collaboration

mainly concerned their participation in the national family forums which, unfortunately, are not fully functional according to participants.

At provincial level, the DSD collaborates with government Departments of Education, Justice and Health, as well as provincial NGOs funded by the DSD, and those 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, the DSD collaborates with the district offices of the Departments of Education, Justice (courts) and Health. Collaboration includes referrals of cases such as those involving early childhood development to the Department of Education, as well as collaborations between other, ad-hoc campaigns and various departments.

*Discussion 16:*

Participants were of the opinion that collaboration was ineffective at all levels since many departments are neither participating in the family forums nor implementing activities on the WPF. According to the participants, collaborations with some government departments are dependent on the DSD units. For instance, the children's unit collaborates directly with the Department of Education when it comes to ECD programmes, or the adoption unit collaborates with the Department of Justice where adoption issues are concerned. It was emphasised that there had been no formal agreement with regard to the involvement of other departments and organisations in terms of their participation and collaboration in implementing the WPF.

*Research Statement 17:*

*"The WPF provides (section 5) for co-ordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation"*. Supervision, monitoring and evaluation are very important in ensuring the effective implementation of the WPF. In this section, the study investigated the way in which the supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the WPF are done.

The participants were asked whether they had been supervised, monitored and evaluated with regard to programmes and activities related to the WPF.

*Feedback 17:* Supervision, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and activities related to the WPF

**Table 16: Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation of programmes and activities related to the WPF**

Participants	Supervision, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and activities related to the WPF			
	Not	Somewhat	Supervised	Total
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 the participants (72.6) indicated that they had not been supervised, monitored or evaluated with regard to programmes and activities related to the implementation of the WPF.

At national level, only the three SWMs from the family unit had been supervised, monitored and evaluated with regard to issues related 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 having been supervised, monitored and evaluated with regard to programmes and activities related to the WPF. At district level, a good number of participants had been supervised, monitored and evaluated with regard to such programmes and activities.

It should 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 unavailable as most of the in-depth interviews were conducted telephonically and attempts to receive such templates failed.

#### 4. 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 of Peters et al. (2013) and the process implementation variables of Fixsen et al. (2005). Petersilia (1990), as cited by Fixsen et al. (2005: 2), argues that "*the ideas embodied in innovative social programmes are not self-executing.*" This means that the implementation of policies is crucial and that implementation research is therefore important in assessing not only the feasibility and sustainability of the policy, as is the case in this study, but also the impact of the implemented policy through different programmes (not the direct focus of this current study).

Peters et al. (2013) argue 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. According to DeGroff and Cargo (2009), the assessment of the implementation of a policy therefore involves investigating both the policy process and the policy outcomes. Citing O'Toole (2000), DeGroff and Cargo (2009) 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.

Ottoson and Green (1987), cited by DeGroff and Cargo (2009) suggest that the successful implementation of a policy should involve the adoption of an iterative process consisting of the transformation of ideas or the policy into behaviour or social action. The social action is therefore the direct result of the policy process and makes a valuable contribution in terms of assessing such a 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 a 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 participants' basic knowledge and understanding of the WPF as a result of its implementation (or lack thereof), using some "implementation outcome variables" by Peters et al. (2013). The selected implementation outcome variables for this study included accessibility, feasibility, fidelity, implementation costs, and sustainability.

## **A. Implementation Outcome Variables**

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

### ***a. Acceptability***

The acceptability of a policy refers to the perception among policy stakeholders, including the policy implementers, managers and policy makers, that an intervention is agreeable (Peters et al., 2013: 5). The authors also relate to the relative advantage and credibility of the policy.

The relative advantage of the WPF was that it was the result of a socio-economic policy transformation that started with the 1992 White Paper for Social Welfare (WPSW), the NFP and the Green Paper, and the now officially approved White Paper on Family. It is important to observe that the WPF is too ambitious to be implemented pragmatically. The background of 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 the Department of Social Development (2013: 16), 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 lost its importance because the WPSW specifically addresses the same cause as the WPF. Not implementing the WPSW shouldn't therefore create an opportunity to duplicate policies. Rather, the effective implementation of the WPSW could have solved the previously-identified problems and therefore avoid the development of the WPF.

The credibility of the WPF is also considered to be at stake because its forerunner policies, namely the WPSW and the NFP, did not address the cause to which the WPF is committed to addressing. Two important issues could have addressed 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 a review should have considered the evaluation of the programmes and systems implemented through the previous policies in order to either improve on such programmes and systems or design a new system or strategy instead of developing or replicating a new policy in the form of the WPF.

The perceptions of the promoters of the WPF that it would achieve social changes and therefore benefit families were misleading as demonstrated in this study:

- The participation of the implementers in the policy design process was not maximised, thus making its implementation impossible. Participants from national, provincial and district levels 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 terms of making the WPF an affair for all to ensure its credibility.
- Although the majority of the participants were aware of the existence of the WPF, almost 50% were unfamiliar with its vision and guiding principles, and almost 80% were unfamiliar with its mission.
- The vision of the WPF is ambitious and its objectives are impractical, unquantifiable and immeasurable. The study shows that 20% of the participants did not know a single objective of the WPF, and that almost 60% of the participants knew only one out of the three objectives.
- The majority of the 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 who were 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, nor how and when it is meant to do so. 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 none of the participants were aware of the existence of this document. There were no departmental, provincial or district implementation plans available from participants at the national, provincial or district levels.

### ***b. Feasibility***

According to Peters et al. (2013: 5), feasibility refers to the extent to which an intervention can be carried out in a particular setting or organisation. The implementation of the WPF is not supported by a proper feasibility report which outlines the interventions to be carried out and the subsequent organisational planning and structure. The DSD has no officially-binding statements on the roles and responsibilities of each DSD unit or other departments and non-governmental and civil society role players. As a direct consequence, there is no proper reporting on the interventions made by all those who are supposed to implement the WPF. The feasibility of a policy can be measured by different factors. In the case of the WPF, and with consideration to the seven guiding principles and recommended actions for family preservation, this study shows that:

- Over 50% of the participants did not know a single guiding principle of the WPF. Only 30% of the participants were familiar with between four and seven guiding principles.
- Almost all of the participants (90%) were unfamiliar with the recommended actions for family preservation, although many of them knew that the WPF involves actions to promote healthy and well-functioning families.

### ***c. Fidelity***

Fidelity represents the degree to which an intervention was implemented according to the way in which it was designed in an original protocol, plan, or policy. Thus, the term fidelity refers to the adherence, the delivery as intended, the integrity, the quality of programme delivery, and the intensity or dosage of delivery (Peters et al., 2013: 5). 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, loyalty or dedication to the WPF to promote and support its implementation 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) for all those who are intended to implement it. The study shows that 70% of the participants either were totally not dedicated or were only 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 (Peters et al., 2013: 5). To be durable, continuous and institutionalised, a policy needs to have proper co-ordination, implementation, supervision, and monitoring and evaluation structures. In the case of this study, it was observed that:

- Close to 80% of the participants knew the role of the DSD at the national, provincial and district levels with regard to the implementation of the WPF. The key role of the DSD at all levels was, according to most participants, to co-ordinate, facilitate, fund and train implementers of the WPF.
- However, participants from other units of the DSD were unaware of their roles and responsibilities in implementing the WPF. They believed that the WPF was meant to be used or implemented by the family unit alone.
- On collaboration, the participants identified different government departments, non-governmental organisations 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, monitoring and evaluation are critical to the successful implementation of a policy. As far as the WPF is concerned, the lack of commitment and dedication meant that the majority of the participants (over 80%) were not supervised, monitored or evaluated on the implementation of the WPF. Clear supervision and monitoring & evaluation tools were also not available to trace the progress achieved in implementing 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. The fact that they had not been carefully considered in the design process of the WPF meant that the successful implementation thereof was hindered.

The degree of the implementation factors can also be classified as predictions of the success of the WPF. Roh (2012) associates the success of a policy with the realisation of prior

positive predictions by its makers. The author argues that prediction makes a policy and its subsequent implementation successful. Being able to predict what makes implementation successful should not only have helped policymakers to address social problems through better policies and regulations, and to anticipate and plan for likely barriers (Roh, 2012), but also to facilitate the design of measurable indicators of success, considering the evaluation and impact assessment of previous policies as observed in this study. Roh (2012) is of the opinion 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 too ambitious and that they do not express possible achievable predictions as was demonstrated in the assessment of the degree of implementation factors.

The section below examines the process implementation (Fixsen et al., 2005), which includes critical factors that could have ensured the successful implementation of the WPF, following the lack of attention given to the degree of implementation factors in the design of the WPF. These factors are explained below.

## **B. Process Implementation**

Fixsen et al. (2005: 6) argue 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 Fixsen et al. (2005), information is crucial in ensuring that the users and beneficiaries of a policy have clarity with regard to the vision and mission statements, as well as the objectives and specific programmes of such policy. Among other aspects, 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.

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

- Although the majority of the participants were aware of the existence of the WPF (over 85%), less than 20% knew when it had been launched. It is therefore not surprising that the users experienced difficulties in implementing a policy of whose official launch they were not even aware.
- The majority of the respondents (58.3%) only knew one of the three objectives of the WPF, whereas only a mere 6.7% knew the three 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 the successful implementation of the WPF when the majority of social work managers and co-ordinators are unfamiliar with its objectives.

- Although 55% of the participants were familiar with the vision of the WPF, as opposed to the 45% who were unfamiliar with it, only about 22% were familiar with its mission. It is clear that the implementation of the WPF was hampered by the users' lack of knowledge with regard to its vision and mission.
- The seven guiding principles of the WPF were unknown to the participants. The majority of the participants (53.3%) did not know a single guiding principle of the WPF, whereas only almost 12% knew all seven of them. It is evident that the users were unable to implement the policy without knowing its guiding principles.

All of the above findings suggest that it was impossible for the participants to implement the WPF. It is crucial to highlight the lack of information sharing with regard to the implementation of the WPF.

- The majority of the participants were unaware of the roles and responsibilities of their respective units with regard to the implementation of the WPF. Consequently, 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 the other units in the DSD are emphasised in the family-centred approach and the integrated service delivery model promoted by the DSD. The roles of other government departments are also stipulated in the

WPF. It is evident that important information with regard to these roles and responsibilities were not shared within and outside of DSD.

### ***b. Training***

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

### ***c. Cost of the Implementation***

According to Peters et al. (2013: 5), determining the incremental cost of the implementation strategy and the total cost of the implementation of a policy is crucial to its success. The authors refer to critical issues such as the cost of the policy interventions with regard to the services to be delivered in various settings. The Department of Social Development (2013: 16) argues that the WPF is the result of the cost-out of the implementation by government departments. However, the opposite was observed in this study as the majority of the participants (76.7%) did not have an allocated budget for the implementation of the WPF. At national level, only three out of 28 participants mentioned having a budget which was insufficient. It was also revealed that a proper costing of the interventions (services, activities, training, etc.) had not been done. For those districts that had 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 had been reduced by the DSD.

### ***d. Implementation Strategies***

Co-ordination, collaboration, supervision, monitoring, evaluation and reporting are critical to the successful implementation of any public policy as 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 co-ordination and leadership roles. However, other units of the DSD believed that it was the sole responsibility of the family unit to implement the WPF. Consequently, all other DSD units did not have clear roles with regard to the implementation of the WPF.

As far as the questions pertaining to the separate roles of the national, provincial and district levels of DSD were concerned, as well as those roles related to the way in which supervision, monitoring, 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's top management on the role to be played by all DSD units in implementing the WPF. It was, however, discovered that the participants were aware of the roles to be played by other departments, especially as part of different family forums that, unfortunately, had not been operational at all levels. In many instances, the participants admitted to having participated in different forums such as the victim empowerment forum where they collaborated with other departments.

In terms of supervision, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, over 70% of the participants admitted to not having been supervised, monitored or evaluated on the implementation of the WPF. They also acknowledged that there was no proper structure for reporting on programmes and activities that had been implemented as part of the WPF. Some participants from the family units admitted to having been supervised, monitored and evaluated on the implementation of the WPF. However, they were sceptical about a proper implementation strategy to facilitate supervision, monitoring, evaluation and 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 not only identified the challenges with regard to the implementation of the WPF, but also summarised the suggested solutions from those who implement, and/or 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 the implementation of the WPF was subjected to the various challenges as recorded in this research 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, feasibility or 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 these factors are considered in the assessment of the implementation of the WPF.

*a. The “Three Criteria”*

Boundless (2016) acknowledges that the successful implementation of a policy depends on three major criteria: (1) communication from the policy creator, (2) interpretation by the users, and (3) resources for the implementation.

A policy therefore needs 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 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 and believed that the WPF was the sole responsibility of the family unit has hindered their participation in the implementation of the WPF.

Boundless (2006) warns that policy implementation can be further 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 or prepared to implement the WPF. For Boundless (2006), implementation imposes a large amount of both direction and confusion in agencies that administer policies. In the case of this study, the DSD should have

carefully planned issues 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. Boundless (2006) argues that the above three issues with policy implementation have led some scholars to conclude that new policy initiatives will either fail to get off the ground or will take considerable time to be implemented. According to Boundless (2016), the most surprising aspect of the policy process may be that policies are not implemented at all. Unfortunately, this conclusion by Boundless is what happened in the case of the implementation of the WPF as shown in this study.

#### ***b. Institutional Structures and Governance***

The identified implementation challenges of the WPF as summarised through the three criteria by Boundless (2006), 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 governance around the WPF is crucial. Reviewing theoretical perspectives on policy implementation, Conteh (2011) argues that in implementing a policy, 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 such policy. Roh (2012) 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 a combination of the two approaches.

In his book titled “An Introduction to the Policy Process”, Birkland (2001) cited by Roh (2012), explains that in the top-down approach, implementation is viewed as being a chain, beginning with a policy message being sent from the top and then following down the chain. The top-down approach assumes that the policy contains clearly-defined goals and policy tools, and is characterised by an authoritative statement, and that “policy designers have good knowledge of the capacity and commitment of the implementers”. Ultimately, this model fails due to the following obstacles: a lack of consensus with regard to goals; lack of co-operation or a refusal to implement at state and local levels; competing interests; and insufficient incentives and/or sanctions for compliance. According to the participants’

analysis of the challenges, 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 according to Roh (2012). It examines those on the street-level who implement the policy and then move up the policy chain. This approach assumes that goals are ambitious (and not explicit) and are sometimes in conflict with existing policies. Thus, local level implementers are allowed a great deal of bargaining during the implementation process, and the policy ultimately works through a network of actors. According to the author, some shortcomings of this approach include overemphasis on local level power, negating a potential lack of resources, and an assumption that groups are active in terms of 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 bottom-up models. It was referred to as “*A Third Generation of Implementation Research*” and 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 is important to the success of the implementation. Such a model was also not applied in the case of the WPF.

The above review shows that the policy design and 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 these important factors, as well as the three criteria by Boundless (2006) as key recommendations of this study.

Lipsky (1969) argued that “policy implementation in the end comes down to the people who actually implement it”. In his book, *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services*, Lipsky (1980) analysed the behaviour of front-line staff in policy delivery agencies. This author refers to these front-line workers as “*street-level bureaucrats*”. These are public employees who interact directly with citizens and have substantial discretion in the execution of their work (Lipsky, 1980: 3). Examples are teachers, police officers, general practitioners and, in this case, social workers. These street-level bureaucrats implement public policies. However, street-level bureaucrats have to respond to citizens with only a

limited amount of information or time to make a decision as has been observed in the case of the implementation of the WPF from the focus group discussions with social work practitioners in the government and NGO sectors (separate PSPPD II research report).

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study values the inputs of participants regarding the challenges they experienced in implementing the WPF and the solutions they suggested which are all valid and important. Classifying them according to order of importance is impossible as each challenge and the way of addressing it are unique. All the challenges and suggested solutions are recorded and form part of the annexure of this research report.

The contribution of this study is to summarise the suggested solutions and inputs from the literature review into three important themes: (1) the emphasis on the essence of the preventive and developmental social work and the family-centred approach by Thomlison and Thomlison (2012); (2) the three criteria by Boundless (2006); and (3) the consideration of the institutional structures and governance by Roh (2012).

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

Thomlison and Thomlison (2012) emphasise the role of families in preventive and developmental social work programmes, and support the ecological-development approach as a way of understanding 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 the family-centred approach to strengthening families. The first category attempts to prevent problems whereas the second and third categories provide services to those who are at risk or who are 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 Boundless (2006) are critical in facilitating the implementation of the WPF. The communication from the policymaker, the interpretation of the policy by its users, and the allocation of resources for the implementation of the policy were found to be lacking and negatively affected the implementation of the WPF. It is therefore imperative that these three criteria be addressed by the DSD.

Communicating with different structures about the existence and 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 in the policy are reached. The communication strategy should include training on the WPF, clarity with regard to its programmes, its users and their particular roles, as well as the implementation strategy. Structures such as 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 an accurate interpretation of the policy by its users and, consequently, facilitate its implementation. It is important at this stage to prepare abridged versions of the WPF, responding not only to its basic information, but also to the roles and responsibilities of particular users, and the implementation strategy and process. A training manual is also an important tool in ensuring that the users have the correct interpretation of the WPF they need to implement.

The allocation of sufficient resources is crucial to the successful implementation of the WPF. The DSD needs to facilitate 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 approaches can be used such as activity- or area-based approach at district level.

### **C. Institutional Structures and Governance**

In *Street-Level Bureaucracy*, Lipsky (1980) recognises the importance of street-level bureaucrats or public servants in the implementation of any policy. 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 undertaken as another component of the “Family Observatory for Preventive and Developmental Social Work” study revealed that social work practitioners were neither involved in the development process of the WPF nor aware of it and trained in it. It is therefore important for the promoters of the WPF to consider institutional structures and governance that prioritise the involvement of the policy implementers and beneficiaries in order to enable their knowledge and understanding of the WPF and, consequently, to facilitate its implementation.

Roh (2012) warns that street-level bureaucrats face the core dilemma of supposedly making decisions about the people for whom they work on the basis of individual cases, yet the structure of their jobs makes this impossible. 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 the dilemmas identified by this study.

Co-operation, collaboration and co-ordination are therefore indispensable to the successful implementation of the WPF. Conteh (2011) emphasises the role of a multi-actor implementation framework to facilitate policy implementation. In other words, this author values the importance of co-operation among public agencies, and between them and organised societal interests in policy implementation. The WPF was developed with an emphasis on inter-governmental and inter-organisational relations as well as active public participation. It is therefore crucial for the DSD to co-ordinate the efforts of all units within the 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 and successful if all role players are instructed on and made

responsible and accountable for their roles in its 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, Conteh (2011: 122) 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 the private sector. The goal is to combine the analytical strengths of these three distinct yet parallel analytical perspectives in order to better understand the policy implementation processes in complex, diverse and dynamic societies.

## **6. 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 regard to the assessment of the WPF. This component of the study targeted the DSD as a key informant besides the information collected by means of the literature review. Some limitations which can prompt new studies are worthy of mention:

- This study (on the basic knowledge and implementation challenges of the WPF) only targeted officials from the DSD, yet other departments and organisations are also meant to implement the policy. It is therefore necessary to replicate the study with other departments and organisations that are supposed to implement the policy.
- The study was only conducted on a 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 take place. A separate, national study on the costing and budgeting of the WPF is essential.
- It is important to highlight that this study did not involve the beneficiaries of services, i.e. families.
- An impact assessment of the WPF with beneficiaries (families) is therefore a potential interesting 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.

## **7. 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 of, or committed or officially dedicated to the implementation of the WPF, they were enthusiastic about its importance and expressed their willingness to support such initiatives, having recognised its importance.

The findings on the knowledge and understanding of the WPF, as well as its challenges with regard to implementation, have been recorded to assist the DSD in drafting strategies that will facilitate the successful implementation of such an important policy. It is important to stress that with the WPF already having been passed, it is not too late to ensure that clear communication will facilitate its correct interpretation by implementers or users and stimulate its successful implementation. Proper costing, budgeting and allocation of sufficient resources as well as the design and implementation of supervision, monitoring and evaluation and evaluation tools will complement and accompany institutional structures and governance for the successful implementation of the WPF.

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## ANNEXURE 1: INPUTS ON IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES BY PARTICIPANTS

The following challenges are not recorded according to order of importance. They reflect the direct explanations by participants and their proposed solutions. This section is therefore recorded “verbatim” to allow the DSD to analyse each challenge separately and to consider the proposed solutions for appropriate actions. Some challenges re-appear at all three levels without making them more important than others, thus, a repetition.

**Table 17: Types of Challenges and Suggested Solutions**

Challenge	Description	Suggested Solution
<b>National DSD</b>		
Training on the WPF to all units of DSD	All units of DSD are not trained on the WPF	All units of the DSD must be trained on the WPF.
Link and alignment of the WPF with other existing policies	WPF is not linked to or aligned with other existing policies	Existing policies should have been considered when developing new ones.
Integration of WPF programmes with programmes from other policies	There is not enough knowledge on the WPF programmes to link them with other programmes	Synergy: working together within and outside the DSD at all levels.
Buy-in of external partners, departments	Other departments don't attend forum meetings	To get the focus of a person at higher level from other departments/organisations and committed and regular participants from each external partner.
Political support of the WPF	Although approved by cabinet, the WPF does not have the full support of politicians (such as ministers, etc.) to favour its implementation	Politicians need to fully support the implementation of the WPF in all departments through the inter-governmental system.
Reporting by other departments on the implementation of the WPF	Other departments are not committed and don't report. Yet, they were consulted and discussed their core functions regarding services to families	A minister can't force other ministers to participate; co-ordination of WPF to be located the Presidency, Premiers' and Mayors' offices to effect compliance.
Resources – Conditions of service delivery by social workers and NGOs – staff high turn-over	Not enough resources to roll out training and provide services, no sufficient infrastructure. Trained staff members move out of the DSD	Need for better conditions of the implementers; retention strategy to be executed to attract and retain social workers; promotion to be accelerated – not 10 year waiting period; incentives in terms of salaries, especially for those in rural areas.
Monitoring and evaluation tools	There are no uniform M&E tools for the implementation of the WPF at all levels	Need for easy-to-use monitoring and evaluation tools with reference to the priorities of the WPF
Capacity in districts where services are provided	No dedicated capacity in districts where one person runs many programmes not focusing solely on the WPF	DSD must have specifically-dedicated persons to run only WPF at all levels

Challenge	Description	Suggested Solution
<b>National DSD</b>		
Supervision	No proper supervision of social workers at implementation level	Social workers need to be supervised, especially the young and new ones.
Lack of support from senior officials at provincial and district levels	The WPF is a new policy. Many senior officials don't understand or support it.	Senior officials must be trained on the WPF and provide support to other officials.
Budget	The Families programmes are treated like ad-hoc. Budget cuts in most provinces for family programmes.	Budget must be increased for the Family Unit to be able to implement the WPF; need for proper costing. There are bids prepared for treasury but stopped by a moratorium. Funding must be sourced from international institutions like UNICEF and multinationals. Moratorium must be lifted.
Collaboration and synergy	No collaboration/synergy in implementing the WPF. The DSD Units work in isolation (silos).	Officials from family units to assist/train/support other units to know and use the WPF; bring other departments and organisations on board to facilitate implementation; family unit to participate in other units/departments' policy design and programme implementations to make sure the WPF is used.
Knowledge, understanding, awareness and information on the WPF	Many people/officials who are supposed to know about the WPF are not aware of its existence. The WPF is not well publicised. It is not understood in all DSD units and outside the DSD. Not knowing the WPF makes it difficult for people to implement it.	Get the Family Forum running, discuss and explain family issues and the WPF. Conduct information sharing from all levels on the WPF. More awareness and publicity is needed to all available and possible platforms, forums and networks.
Poor socio-economic conditions of many families	The poor socio-economic conditions of many families result in instabilities and divorces, making the work of DSD and the implementation thereof difficult, if not impossible. No or less means for survival for many families, power relations issues such as gender relations in families.	The conditions of families should be bettered (skills, job creation and empowerment beyond just social grants) to facilitate stability of families, marriages (economic and social stability). Then awareness and counselling to couples is a necessity and effective service to couples in trouble
Roles and responsibilities	Roles/responsibilities of each DSD unit and other departments/organisations and the links to their respective policies unclear.	Roles and responsibilities of all concerned must be clarified and subsequent training undertaken.
No streamlining at local and district levels	No dedicated person for the WPF. Officials are in charge of many responsibilities (units).	Streamlining should include: having specifically-dedicated officials for Family Units at all levels; extensive training of all those in charge of implementing the WPF; advocacy, publicity, bargaining to escalate to senior managers, provision of sufficient resources for implementation of WPF

Challenge	Description	Suggested Solution
<b>National DSD</b>		
Context of the WPF	The traditional, religious and cultural values of the majority of the population are not considered. For instance, men are considered to be responsible or part of the problem, not the solution.	The respect/inclusion of traditional, religious and cultural values should be considered (flexibility and bring the WPF to the level of the people, especially the role and contribution of men).
Involvement of those concerned and communities	People/community concerned were not involved in the policy process and designing of programmes and activities (which might not necessarily be the best).	Involve families and communities in decision-making process when discussing interventions to be implemented.
WPF is not a legislation	The WPF is not a legislation but a policy.	The WPF should be taken into the process of becoming a full legislation (Act).
Guidance on implementing the WPF	There are no guidelines to facilitate the implementation of the WPF.	There must be clear and easy-to-use guidelines which must provide directives to all units and departments on how to implement the WPF.
<b>FS Province</b>		
Knowledge and Understanding of the WPF	Not all role-players know or understand the WPF.	Need for training of all role-players and to sensitise them on the importance of the WPF.
Human Resources shortage and high turn-over	High turn-over of co-ordinators at district level. Structure is small, hampering implementation.	Apply a strategy to retain qualified trained district co-ordinators and supervisors (award). Fill-up posts.
Budget	The budget is insufficient for rolling out training and for the implementation of the WPF.	Need for sufficient (costed) budget for the implementation of the WPF. An incremental strategy considering inflation is needed.
Language barriers	Some social workers have language limitations when dealing directly with families.	Social workers need to know languages of the areas where they operate from.
Collaboration and partnership	Not all key and relevant departments and organisations are involved.	Need for strategies to facilitate the involvement of all DSD units, departments and organisations.
Political interference	Politicians use the policies for their own publicity, rather than in the interest of families.	Politicians should be sensitised to be aware of the WPF and to contribute towards sensitising the people.
No synergy of policies	Some policies clash with and go against others.	Review and integrate policies where possible.
Service integration and co-ordination	Departments work in silos. No synergy and integration of services to bring change to families. Some families are inundated with and frustrated by visits from different DSD units or departments, yet they are not receiving sufficient assistance.	DSD should co-ordinate inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial structures for the implementation of the WPF. Integrated approach to service delivery should be part of performance assessment within the DSD and at inter-sectoral, inter-ministerial levels.
Focus of the WPF	The reading of the WPF is that it is more child-oriented.	WPF should be re-focused to prioritise families rather than children's issues only.

Challenge	Description	Suggested Solution
<b>FS Province</b>		
Importance of the WPF	The importance of the WPF is not clarified by the DSD, making DSD units work in silos as well as other departments.	The WPF can yield results if people know about it to implement it. The forums are not sufficient. The roles of all must be clarified and their involved must be enforced.
Capacity building/training	People in charge of the implementation of the WPF don't know it and are not trained.	Identify all key implementers then thoroughly and regularly train and retain them.
Implementation strategy	Focus is more on solutions than on prevention and early intervention.	The implementation of the WPF should focus more on prevention and early intervention.
<b>FS Districts</b>		
Socio-economic dysfunction of families	Families are socially and economically dysfunctional, considering the rate of unemployment and levels of poverty.	The WPF can only be successful if the socio-economic conditions of families are bettered through job creation and employment. WPF should supplement not be the solution to all socio-economic problems.
Integration of services within the DSD	The WPF is not implemented holistically the way it should be.	All units must be aware of their responsibilities and roles (from national down) for services to be integrated within the DSD to benefit the families.
Lack of specialised NGOs to provide direct services to families	There are no specialised NGOs such as FAMSA to provide services to address the problems families face.	Specialised NGOs need to be funded to deliver services directly to families.
Shortage of social workers and supervisors	There are insufficient human resources (social workers and supervisors) to implement the WPF.	Need for specialised (family issues) social workers and supervisors to implement the WPF.
Marketing/publicity	The WPF is unknown, especially in communities.	Market and publicise the WPF.
Training of the personnel	Those implementing the WPF are not well trained.	Thoroughly train those implementing the WPF .
Budget	There are no sufficient resources to implement the WPF. Costed services are not funded for. No appropriate and sufficient infrastructure.	Need for a sufficient budget. Costing to take into account all needs and the budget to be approved to cover all costs and infrastructure
Awareness on the WPF	No clarity on WPF ideal/vision/mission/objectives.	Clarify and make people aware of the WPF ideal/vision/mission/objectives, roles, etc.
Human resources issues (high turn-over)	Offices are under-staffed; high turn-over of trained social workers; social workers have overwhelming caseloads and many posts are unfilled.	Develop and implement retention strategies, provide incentives such as rural allowances to keep staff focused and committed. Fill all posts and have dedicated social workers for family issues only.
Implementation structure	There is no structure and personnel for the implementation of the WPF at district level.	The right specialised people should be appointed to implement the WPF at district level.
Buy-in	Municipalities were not involved in the designing of the WPF.	Municipalities must be involved and encouraged.
Monitoring and Evaluation	There are no easy-to-use M&E uniform tools.	M&E tools should be uniform and used by all.

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Suggested Solution</b>
<b>FS Districts</b>		
Leadership and support system	The leadership is not aware of the WPF. Some are not social workers and do not support the WPF.	The leadership should be trained on the WPF and made to champion and support its implementation.
Commitment	The WPF is not seen as a core business of all units and departments who work in silos – duplicating service.	DSD to engage and train all units/departments and encourage their participation in implementing WPF.
No participation of the beneficiaries	The beneficiaries are not involved in the planning and execution of programmes.	Beneficiaries should engage in the planning and execution of programmes.
<b>EC Province</b>		
Budget	No sufficient budget to implement all programmes even for just the family unit. The WPF was approved without an implementation budget.	DSD to collate all costs/budgets and bid for a full budget from treasury and/or international institutions UNICEF and or UNDP.
Shortage of staff	There is a shortage of staff for the implementation.	Social workers and supervisors need to be appointed to implement the WPF.
Collaboration and co-ordination	Units and departments are working in isolation.	Collaboration/co-ordination needs to be strengthened and led by the family unit and DSD externally.
Commitment of other units/departments	Most units/other departments are not participating.	Commitment and participation of all is important.
Confusion in forums	Family forums are mixed with other forums, such as VEP or children.	Family Forums must be stand-alone or independent forums (not mixed with other forums).
Training	Training and training roll-outs are not taking place.	Proper budget for training and training roll-outs
Participation and reporting	Role players are not participating or reporting on the implementation of the WPF.	Participation of all role players to be compulsory and a reporting system established and implemented.
<b>EC Districts</b>		
Budget	The budget is insufficient to fund NGOs and to implement other programmes such as awareness and for the infrastructure. Access to some areas is impossible. No understandable budget plans.	More financial resources should be allocated to districts. Need for dedicated personnel and sufficient infrastructure. Study a possibility for social workers to access subsidised vehicles.
Socio-economic barriers, poverty and inequality	People are uneducated and have no jobs, making them dependent, contributing to the scourge of social ills.	Need for developmental social programmes to bring people out of poverty. Creation of social clubs for people to interact and share information.
Communication/information	The WPF is not well-communicated, even in the family units of the DSD.	DSD to have a communication/marketing strategy for the WPF to be known internally and externally.
Human resources challenges	Shortage of social workers; those available are full caseloads. Some areas don't have social workers.	Need to employ and train more social workers and to make them dedicated to the WPF.

Challenge	Description	Suggested Solution
<b>EC Districts</b>		
Training	Social workers are not trained/specialised in the WPF. The first-hand training is not directed at social workers.	DSD to develop and implement a generic yet specialised training system and trainers on the WPF and focus on training the users (social workers).
Interference of politicians	Politicians impose programmes (such as food distribution during elections time) which are not directly related to social workers' duties or plans.	De-politicise the implementation of policies and get politicians involved to support the policy, not impose other unrelated programmes.
Importance of WPF and readiness of all partners	All partners are unaware of the importance of the WPF. Implementation did not take into account the readiness of all involved.	Need for a campaign to raise the consciousness of all those involved on the importance of the WPF to gain their commitment for implementation.
Integration of services	Activities, programmes and budgets are not integrated at implementation level.	Integrated planning, using family-centred approach involving all units/departments.
Dependency	Districts (implementing the WPF) have no control over costing and the budget.	A bottom-up costing and budgeting system is important for districts to implement the WPF.