FAMILY POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

UN EGM
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Historically, the family has always been perceived as the social institution that is to provide love, security and protection to all who live in it. Paradoxically, for some it has also entailed experiencing many social ills.
Apartheid and capitalist labour-based economy have shaped South African society:

- Extremely unequal society.
- Mass poverty.
- HIV/AIDS epidemic
- Multi- & Skip- generation households.

Contemporary challenges:

- High inequality & unemployment.
- Violence against women.
- Non-resident and absent fathers.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC
- Continuing unemployment
- Service delivery challenges

Continuing unemployment
SETTING THE CONTEXT

• Holborn and Eddy (2011), Kruger (2013) and Nkosi and Daniels (2007) have argued that diminished advocacy role of civil society typified by unequal access to resources and opportunities have resulted in the erosion of the strengths, resilience and assets of family life.

• Such factors have exposed families to physical, political, health, social and economic exploitation.
CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURES

• Families are dynamic, fluid and continuous rather than static systems, which produces much diversity within family relationships.
• The White Paper on families (Department of Youth Development, RSA, 2013) strives towards promoting healthy families, strengthening families and family preservation. Significantly, families should be respected as equal partners, but are often disempowered by being blamed for their unhealthy, unsafe circumstances.
PURPOSE OF FAMILY POLICY

Sewpaul (2016) asserts that family policies must acknowledge the powerful sources of privileges, forces of exclusion, poverty and oppression that impact on families’ daily lives. Raniga et al. (2019) emphasize that policies must pay attention to the changing trends in the structure and dynamics in families, especially with the impact of poverty and inequality.
Family policies can include:

- Government taxation, fiscal spending on cash benefits e.g. child support grants; pensions and disability grants;
- Income protection through social insurance schemes e.g. employment benefits, maternity, paternity, and parental leave; childcare support to facilitate women’s labour market participation; gainful employment and Investments in care and basic services for vulnerable members of families.
Good family policies:

01 Recognise the context that frames family life and seeks to address structural challenges (e.g. poverty and unemployment).

02 Combine a range of interventions to address poverty and inequality.
   • This lowers the burden of care and recognises the contribution families make to society.

03 Involve integration of services between state and civil society.

04 Use a family & community-centred approach to service delivery.

05 Monitor outcomes.
Policy development: Background

- Final Draft National Policy Framework 2005
- Green paper on Families 2011 South African Cabinet approved
- White paper on Families 2013
- REVISED WHITE PAPER ON FAMILIES 2021
Overview of the Revised Paper on Families 2021
REVIEW PROCESS

Academic journal articles

Reviews of the WPF and its implementation (DPME, DSD)

2018 Roundtable session notes and review report

8 provincial workshops — 251 stakeholders

National Workshop (2021)
1. Limited/narrow focus on what a family (should) look like rather than the quality of family relationships
2. Problematizing different forms of families in relation to middle class, nuclear vision of family
3. Emphasis on role of family in wider society, rather than societal/state responsibilities towards families
4. Reference to moral capacity/ degeneration — judgmental/conservative
5. Context of poverty, unemployment
6. Realities of women as main care providers is hidden
7. Role of men is not considered/ highlighted in a meaningful way
8. Bias towards nuclear family, no acknowledgement of non–biological fathers and their role, some groups left out (LGBTQI parents), focus on stable unions, etc
9. Little information on how resilience will be enhanced
10. Not enough emphasis on research for context–specific interventions
11. Overemphasis on keeping families together
CO-ORDINATION

- Poor co-ordination and planning between different levels and different forums.
- Challenges related to the family forums:
  - Lack of consistent attendance by departments.
  - Capacity building appears to be happening but no data

IMPLEMENTATION

- Buy in: Lack of coordinated collaboration + coordinated response by relevant departments and other stakeholders
- Lack of alignment with strategic priorities
- Budgetary constraints
- Lack of knowledge of the WPF/Training

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- No outcome indicators are provided to assess what difference the interventions are expected to make (what exactly needs to change?)
  - Indicators poorly defined
  - Targets unclear
- Lack of standardised monitoring and reporting protocols.
- Lack of monitoring and reporting of the intersectoral collaboration across government departments.
- Lack of monitoring of provincial expenditure in line with the policy.
- Little is known about the quality of programmes, contents, modes of delivery and effectiveness
- Lack of accountability – as clusters oversee the WPF but cannot interfere with the prerogatives of other departments.
Sections 1 and 2: Overview of revisions
Section 3: Overview of revisions to Strategic Priorities

- **SP1**: Promotion of family wellbeing
  - Macro and meso level

- **SP2**: Family & Relationship Strengthening
  - Meso level

- **SP3**: Treatment & Support for Vulnerable Families
  - Meso and micro level

Options:
- Promotive and preventive oriented
- Preventive to treatment/statutory oriented
Section 4: Suggestions for Effective Coordination, Implementation, and Monitoring

- Develop a standard set of indicators to track family wellbeing annually using available and regularly released data
- Identify gaps and develop annual strategic plans to address gaps
- Monitor actions identified in strategic plans
- Annually assess whether progress is being made towards improved family wellbeing and adjust strategic plans as necessary.
- Gather data on the approximate number and spread of family programmes offered by government, civil society and the private sector including:
  - Identify gaps in service delivery and promote the development of such services in underserved areas.
  - Identify good practice and evidence-based programmes that can be scaled up through government and civil society.
  - Allocate resources to capacity building of government and civil society service providers to deliver good practice and evidence-based programmes.
  - Facilitate accredited training of professionals and volunteers
Section 4 continued

- Curate evidence-based information on domestic violence, abuse, substance abuse and other factors affecting vulnerable families as well as effective help-seeking strategies and support services.
- Disseminate such information to Provincial and Local FSFs and other networks to inform awareness and information campaigns.
- Gather data on the approximate number and spread of treatment and support programmes offered by government, civil society and the private sector.
- Identify gaps in service delivery and promote the development of such services in under-served areas.
- Identify good practice and evidence-based programmes that can be scaled up through government and civil society.
- Allocate resources to capacity building of government and civil society service providers to deliver good practice and evidence-based programmes.
The work of the FSFs, as the core coordinating mechanism driving the implementation of the Revised WPF, needs to be appropriately resourced and budgeted for at each level.

At least one individual per FSF is required to coordinate the engagements, prepare documentation for the engagements, document the annual strategic plans, engage with FSFs at other levels, and monitor implementation of the annual strategic plans. Resourcing for this capacity needs to be factored into annual budgets at all levels.

Resources for the annual analysis of data to form the annual strategic plans should be set aside.

In addition, the annual strategic plans that are developed by the FSFs should be done so in time to inform budgeting processes at departmental level so that the departments of social development at all levels can include budgets for strategic plans into annual budgets for the departments.

Budgets for capacity building of government and civil society organisations should be set aside to ensure that evidence-based and good practice programmes can be effectively scaled up.