

April 2020

Policy and Program Cycle

Sports for Social Impact

About Sports for Social Impact

Sports for Social Impact seeks to explore and educate on the power that sport has to create a positive impact on society. Specifically looking at sport policy and how we can use programs and policies for maximum impact. The hope is that these conversations and ideas will help achieve the maximum benefit of sport in our society.

SSI believes in quality sport and recreation programs that are inclusive and accessible to all in society to benefit from. Sports are for everybody and everyone should be able to enjoy the benefits of it. Sports have a huge capacity to do good in our society. Harnessing that power and optimizing it to make the biggest impact possible is what we hope to discover.

Some of the ways that sport can have an impact are through social inclusion, international development, helping achieve the SDGs, climate change, and many others. We plan to explore how sport can be used to create a meaningful impact, and some of the challenges that we are faced with when trying to make an impact. Sports can also have a social impact in small ways. It can help people live healthier and more active lives, help them with their mental health and help people make friends and meet new people. There is no one right way that sports to have a positive impact.

Mission and Vision

Sports for Social Impact seeks to explore and educate on the power that sport has to create a positive impact on society.

Quality sport and recreation programs that are inclusive and accessible to all in society to benefit from.



Policy & Program Cycle

This policy and program cycle was developed from my experiences working in the federal government and through my courses during my Masters in Public Policy and Administration.

This guide was developed to help understand the process for policy and program development. This can be applied in many different scenarios. Policy makers can use it, entrepreneurs can use this cycle to help develop their programs. It is a very versatile tool that can be applied in different areas.

This guide will take you through each phase of the cycle to help you understand what each phase entails.

Problem Identification & Definition

Public policy and public programs are created to address problems. Understanding the root causes of the problem is important to creating a policy or program. It is important to differentiate between the symptoms of the problem and the problem itself. For example, in Canada there has been a decline of participation in organised sports. Is this the problem or a symptom of the problem? The problem could be that sports have become too expensive. To solve the problem you have to address the causes, not the symptoms.

Most challenges, whether social, economic or environmental, have multiple layers which need to be thoroughly understood to ensure that policy and programs are addressing the causes of the problem.

Questions to consider when identifying the problem:

- Who identified the problem and is it a problem?
- Is it an issue that can be addressed by public policy?
- How is the problem seen from people from different perspectives and different values?
- Is the problem totally understood? What could cause this problem?



Research and Analysis

Research is the collection of information and it is the foundation for any good public policy or program development. Through research and data analysis it provides the evidence to justify why a policy or program is needed. Research and analysis allows you to advocate for the need of your program or policy and have the evidence to back it up.

Analysis includes applying different lenses to the research you are conducting. Policies and programs can have different impacts (positive or negative) on different segments of our society without even meaning too. Public policy is often used as a blanket approach, assuming that one policy will meet the needs of everyone in society.

We must include more women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and the LGBTQ+ community, and other minority groups in the public policy making process. This means more than just consulting them. They have to be at the beginning, middle and end of the process. Having these people at the table throughout the cycle allows the policy formulation to consider all angles to ensure that the policy works for everyone.

It is especially important to keep in mind cultural awareness when working in a different country. Societal and cultural norms are different and one policy or program that worked in your home country could fail miserably in another because you did not take into consideration the norms of that country. Different cultural practices can influence a policy or program from succeeding or failing.

Different lenses to apply when doing analysis:

- Gender-Based Analysis
- Socio-Economic Status
- Persons with Disabilities
- Ethnic Minorities
- Cultural Awareness
- LGBTQ+ Analysis
- Rural/ Urban Lense

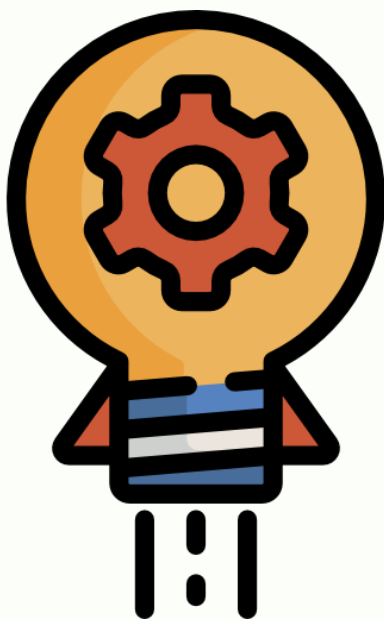
Ideation

Many different policy and program options are available to address the problem identified. The breadth of the problem will determine the scope of the solution. This stage requires people to think outside of the box to come up with different approaches to solving the problem.

Does this require a legislative/regulatory change? Is this a change in program delivery? Does it require a new program or policy all together? Is there another policy or program trying to address this? What is the public/private sector already trying to do? What has been working, what has not been working?

Using human-centred design principles to conceptualize solutions that fit into society at large and focusing on the long term sustainability of the program.

This step requires innovative and new ways of thinking to tackle old problems. In this stage it is important to look at all possible solutions and determine which will be the best to achieve the desired outcome.

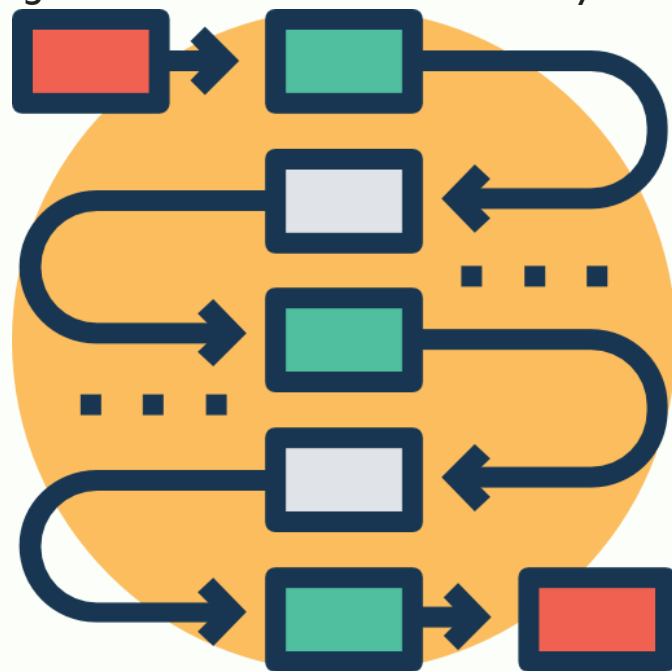


Developing Proposals

Creating an action plan (or briefing note in government) must follow a framework that demonstrates the strategic plan for how to implement the solution, a briefing note usually consists of the top three recommendations for upper management to decide from. The action plan or briefing note will outline the potential impacts of each solution on the public and alternative stakeholders. The briefing note should clearly identify which of the three recommendations is the preferred option.

The proposal should outline the problem, and how the project will solve the problem. It should also outline the consultation, testing and implementation steps.

Ensure that you identify the goals and desired outcomes clearly.



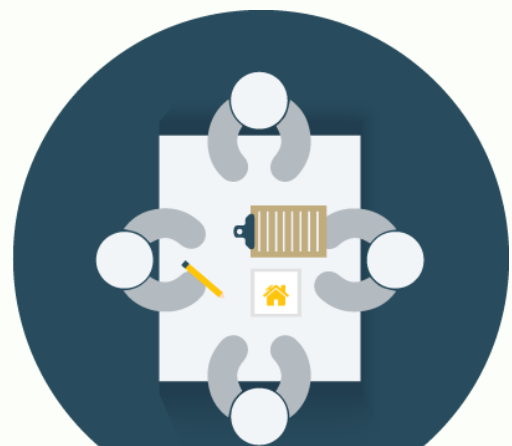
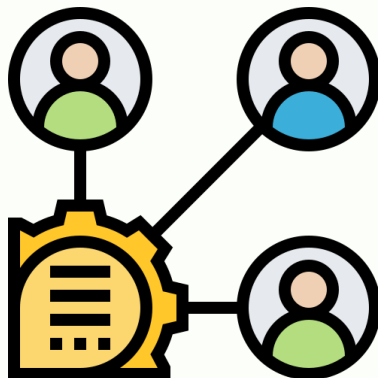
Consultation

Consultations are important for any policy, program or project, and should really be done throughout the entire process. Consultation is especially important when you do not have diversity around the decision making table. Consultations can help apply the different lenses that were discussed earlier. By speaking directly with clients, stakeholders, target groups, other organisations, and others you can get more feedback on if the idea achieved the desired outcome or not.

Consultations are a dialogue that allows everyone (public, private, voluntary, and community sectors) to have their say on decisions made. Especially in the case of government where they are given a mandate to implement policies that are in the interest of the public.

Consultations increase accountability and transparency for all organisations who undertake consultations. Consultations help build trust between stakeholders and good working relationships that are necessary for successful implementation of policies and programs.

Consultations can take place internally between different departments and teams, perhaps there is a client experience team that you may want to consult in your workplace. Consultations can occur between organisations (government to government, corporation and government) and with anyone possibly impacted by the new project.



Testing

The testing and consultation steps are very similar, but testing is when you try out a proposal to see how it would work in a real life setting. Testing is a more direct form of consultation.

Targeted testing allows you to gather feedback and inputs from stakeholders and partners on any aspect of the program or policy. This allows for a more user-friendly and client centred approach.

This can include anything from testing the forms and applications, instruction guides, and the program itself. If you are developing a youth soccer program, perhaps you want to test locations to see which is easier for your target audience to get to.

Testing forms and applications is important because often the target group is one that may be disadvantaged in some way, so ensuring that plain language is used so that they can understand the forms is very important. If a form or application is too complicated some may decide to not even sign up.



Implementation

This is the stage in the process where action occurs to address the identified problem. At this stage, the design of a proposal is put into effect and the project is executed. Implementation will mean providing instructions to processing agents, program officers, program coordinators or the launch of a new service.

Implementation will require some form of announcement to let people know about the new program that is taking place in their community. Community outreach is an important part of the cycle to ensure that people know about what you are offering.

The success of an implemented policy will depend on three things:

- Clear Goals Identified
- Consultation and application of various lenses
- Ability to evaluate & re-assess

These will allow you to be able to review your policy or program to ensure that it is meeting its desired goal. Without clear goals, you have no way of telling that it was successful.

To minimize the risk of a plan working in theory but not in practice, implementation should be consulted on and tested during the stages before this.



Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important to know if public policies and programs work as they were intended and deliver on the promises. Evaluation considerations must begin early in the development cycle. Objectives and indicators must be established early on to determine effectiveness.

Monitoring means that the program and policy must be carefully watched while it is being run to see how it works while it is running. If you implement something and no one signs up, but do nothing about it, it will be a failure. It must be monitored to ensure that all is running smoothly.

Evaluation is not just seeing if the initiative was a success or a failure. Evaluation is about making information and data on the initiative's success or failure. Findings can lead to a more effective and efficient delivery and implementation next time. This can include both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

The goals identified earlier will be key to determining if it was a success or failure.

Talking to the people who participated is a really important way to get feedback and evaluate. Client privacy must be taken into consideration.

