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STRENGTHENING THE ENABLING
ENVIRONMENT THROUGH THE
POLICY-ADVOCACY COMPLEX (PAC):
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR
EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY AND
POLICY-SHAPING IN DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMMING WITH A FOCUS ON
THE PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR

A DISCUSSION PAPER BY DR FRANCIS OHANYIDO

Strengthening the Enabling Environment through the Policy-Advocacy Complex (PAC): A Conceptual Framework for Evidence-Based Advocacy and Policy-Shaping in Development Programming with a Focus on the Public Health Sector



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Background

This paper presents a conceptual framework for the *Policy-Advocacy Complex (PAC)* in strengthening the enabling environment through evidence-based advocacy, advocacy-focused campaigns, policy bottleneck analysis and solutions, policy obstacles, policy-shaping in development programming, and community voice for social accountability. Dr Francis Ohanyido's conceptualisation serves as the foundation for this framework, which specifically applies to the public health sector. The paper also explores how the West African Institute of Public Health (WAIPH) integrates the PAC concept into its training programmes and competency-building paradigms.

Keywords: Policy-Advocacy Complex, enabling environment, evidence-based advocacy, advocacy-focused campaigns, policy bottleneck analysis, policy obstacles, policy-shaping, development programming, public health sector, community voice, social accountability, WAIPH

Introduction

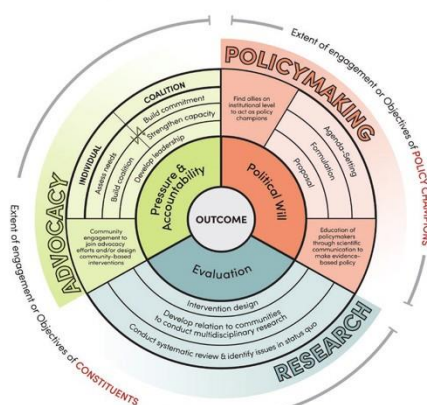
The Policy-Advocacy Complex (PAC) is a conceptual framework that provides a comprehensive approach to strengthening the enabling environment for policy change and implementation. The PAC framework emphasises evidence-based advocacy, advocacy-focused campaigns, policy bottleneck analysis and solutions, research and policy-shaping in development programming. This paper explores the various components of the PAC and its application in the public health sector.

The Policy-Advocacy Complex (PAC)

2.1 Definition and Conceptualisation

The PAC is a multifaceted approach that recognises the interconnectedness between policy, programme, and implementation levels. It acknowledges the need for evidence-based advocacy to drive policy change and create an enabling environment for effective development programming. The PAC framework incorporates policy bottleneck analysis to identify barriers and propose solutions, as well as policy-shaping to ensure policies align with the desired outcomes.

Constituent-driven Policy Advocacy Model: A Proposed Theoretical Framework



At community level, the Constituency -Driven Policy Advocacy Model is one approach to activate the complex in formulating evidence-based health policy based on the priorities of the stakeholder, anchored on a tripod of action domains of advocacy, policymaking and research as the mordant that holds the other two.

2.2 Components of the PAC Framework

2.2.1 Evidence-Based Advocacy

Fig 1: Constituent Driven Policy Advocacy Model

¹ Figueroa, Roger; Verma, Rahul 2023/01/24. Constituent-driven health policy informed by policy advocacy literature. 13.10.1093/tbm/ibac116 Translational Behavioral Medicine https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Constituent-driven-Policy-Advocacy-Model-CPAM_fig1_367395530

Evidence-based advocacy involves the use of data, research, problem identification and compelling arguments to influence policymakers and stakeholders. It requires a comprehensive understanding of the policy landscape and the ability to communicate evidence effectively to drive policy change. So, whether at individual or systems level, an advocacy will seek to give voice to the unheard voices on critical issues grounded in science.

2.2.2 Advocacy-Focused Campaigns

Advocacy-focused campaigns are strategic initiatives aimed at raising awareness, mobilising public support, and influencing decision-makers. These campaigns employ various communication channels, including social media, public events, and targeted messaging, to generate momentum and create a favourable environment for policy change.

2.2.3 Policy Bottleneck Analysis and Solutions

Policy bottleneck analysis involves identifying barriers and bottlenecks that hinder policy implementation and desired outcomes. This analysis helps pinpoint specific areas for improvement and enables the development of evidence-based solutions to address these bottlenecks effectively.

2.2.4 Policy Obstacles

Policy obstacles refer to systemic challenges and barriers that impede the formulation and implementation of effective policies. Identifying and understanding these obstacles is crucial for developing targeted advocacy strategies and policy reforms.

2.2.5 Policy-Shaping in Development Programming

Policy-shaping entails actively engaging in the formulation and modification of policies to align with desired programmatic outcomes. This component emphasises the importance of stakeholders' participation, evidence-based decision-making, and the integration of local context in policy development processes.

2.2.6 Community Voice for Social Accountability

Community voice and social accountability ensure that policies and programs are responsive to the needs and preferences of the communities they serve. Inclusion of community perspectives and engagement fosters ownership, accountability, and sustainability in policy implementation. It empowers community members to actively participate in decision-making processes, voice their concerns, and hold policymakers and implementers accountable. By incorporating community feedback, policymakers can better understand the local context, cultural nuances, and unique challenges, leading to policies and programs that are more effective and impactful in addressing community health needs.

Application of the PAC Framework in the Public Health Sector

The PAC framework finds particular relevance in the public health sector, where evidence-based decision-making, policy reform, and stakeholder engagement are crucial for improving health outcomes. In public health, the PAC framework can be applied to address various challenges, such as improving access to healthcare services, reducing health

disparities, promoting preventive measures, and enhancing healthcare delivery systems. For instance, evidence-based advocacy can be utilized to push for policies that prioritize public health interventions, while policy bottleneck analysis helps identify barriers in healthcare delivery and propose solutions for more efficient and equitable service provision. Stakeholder engagement, including community involvement, fosters collaboration, ensures buy-in, and promotes sustainable solutions.

Integration of the PAC Concept into WAIPH Training Programmes

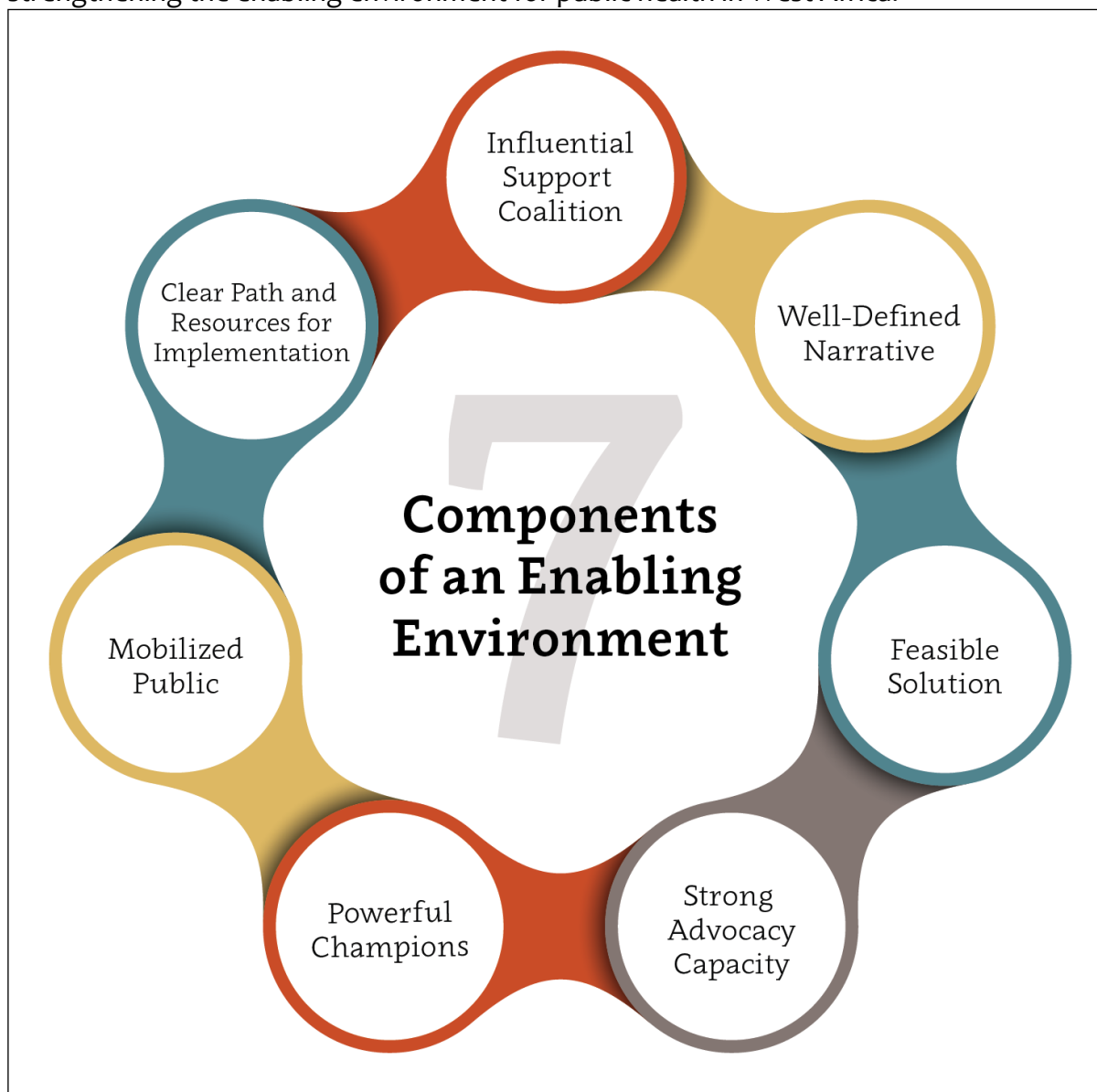
The West African Institute of Public Health (WAIPH) recognizes the importance of the PAC framework in building the capacity of public health professionals and advocates. This recognition is reflected in WAIPH's training programmes and competency-building paradigms, such as the Young Professionals in Public Health Programme (YPPH), fellowships, and masterclasses. These initiatives incorporate the seven components of the enabling environment, namely: a well-defined narrative, feasible solutions, a strong advocacy capacity, powerful champions, a mobilized public, a clear path and resources for implementation, and an influential support coalition.

WAIPH integrates the PAC concept into its training programmes by equipping participants with the knowledge and skills necessary for evidence-based advocacy. It emphasizes the importance of understanding policy bottlenecks and developing feasible solutions through policy bottleneck analysis. The training also focuses on policy-shaping techniques to align policies with programmatic objectives. Community engagement and the inclusion of community perspectives are central to WAIPH's training approach, as it recognizes that community voice is vital for social accountability and ensures that policies and programmes are contextually appropriate and sustainable.

WAIPH's training curriculum incorporates practical case studies and experiential learning methods to provide participants with hands-on experience in applying the PAC framework. Through interactive workshops, collaborative projects, and mentorship opportunities, participants develop the necessary competencies to effectively navigate the policy landscape, advocate for change, and drive evidence-based decision-making in the public health sector.

By integrating the PAC concept into its training programmes, WAIPH contributes to the development of a skilled workforce that can drive positive change and contribute to

strengthening the enabling environment for public health in West Africa.



Conclusion

The Policy-Advocacy Complex (PAC) provides a comprehensive framework for strengthening the enabling environment through evidence-based advocacy, advocacy-focused campaigns, policy bottleneck analysis and solutions, policy-shaping, and community voice for social accountability. In the context of the public health sector, the PAC framework has significant potential to drive policy change, improve programmes implementation, and enhance health outcomes. WAIPH's integration of the PAC concept in its training programmes further reinforces the importance of building the capacity of public health professionals in leveraging evidence and advocacy to shape policies and programmes effectively.