An Introductory Guide to Implementation

Terms, Concepts and Frameworks

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CES Guide

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Acknowledgements

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Section 1: Background to the Guide

Objective of this guide

This guide is intended as a **quick reference document** to introduce readers to the key terms, concepts and frameworks associated with implementation.

There is a growing body of literature on implementation across a range of sectors, from which some consistent messages are emerging. This guide aims to explain those messages; it does not intend to encompass all terms relating to implementation. The objective, rather, is to **outline our understanding of implementation.**

The guide is intended for all those with an interest in implementation, who may not be familiar with all of the literature. This includes policy-makers, service providers, practitioners and researchers.

Background and origins

Supporting implementation of policy, systems and practice is a core element of the work of CES. In August 2011, CES co-ordinated a delegation of policy-makers, service providers, practitioners and researchers from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to attend the first Global Implementation Conference in Washington, D.C., USA.

Following the conference, the group from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland developed a network to build upon what they had learned at the conference with the purpose of advancing implementation in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. CES has drawn upon the knowledge of this network, and expertise within CES to develop this guide.

Sources

Material for this guide was sourced from books, journal articles, websites and other published and unpublished documents and briefs. Sources are listed in the bibliography and resources section at the end of the guide.

Terms

The field of implementation spans nearly every sector and can, therefore, refer to the delivery of any plan or action. This guide relates specifically to the implementation of policies, practices, services or programmes in human and social services. For brevity's sake, we use the term 'innovation' to refer to any policy, practice, service or programme being implemented, be it an improvement or change to an *existing* policy, practice, service or programme, or a *new* innovation being implemented.

Section 2: Introduction to Implementation

Why does implementation matter?

A great deal of knowledge about what works in human and social services has been amassed in recent years. Outcomes for clients, however, have not improved in line with these advances in knowledge. This deficit has become known as the **'implementation gap'**, and refers to the difference between the evidence of what works in theory and what is delivered in practice. In policy, this often refers to the gap between the intentions of policy-makers and policy as delivered via services for citizens. Implementation bridges this gap between what is known and what is done.

Research efforts, however, have focused primarily on improving innovations, while *how* to implement them has been largely neglected. We now know that knowledge about best practice is necessary but not sufficient to effect change in practice and policy. Effective implementation is also needed if these changes are to occur.

What is implementation?

> **At its simplest, implementation can be described as the carrying out of a plan for doing something. It focuses on operationalising the plan – the How, rather than the What.**

As highlighted in the introduction, implementation can refer to any innovation. For example, implementation can refer to the delivery of a specific programme, in which case, it refers to a purposeful set of activities undertaken to incorporate the distinct components of that programme into a service or community setting.

Similarly, it can relate to policy, which involves a series of activities undertaken by government and its institutions to achieve the goals and objectives articulated in policy statements. Policy implementation sits within the 'policy cycle', which involves policy design followed by policy delivery and then policy review. In practice, however, the lines between these stages in the policy cycle can become quite blurred.

Figure 1 Policy cycle
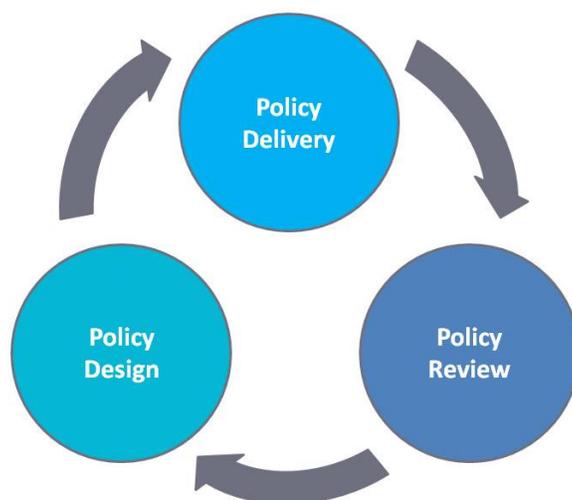
There is broad agreement that implementation is a complex process, whether it pertains to the implementation of policy or services, as those implementing an innovation must manage challenges across multiple levels: systems transformation; changing service provider behaviour; restructuring organisational settings.

Implementation in Ireland

In Ireland, there are cases where this complex process has been managed successfully and effective implementation has occurred, while there are other cases in which planned innovations have failed to translate into actions. Examples of successful implementation, in both policy and practice settings are provided below.

Figure 2 Example of **policy** implementation

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Road Safety Policy

Since 2001 Ireland has seen a rapid improvement in road safety, with deaths down by 41%. Ireland is now 7th out of 27 EU Member States in road deaths per million population. With a reduction in deaths from 411 (2001) to 241 (2009), the national target has been achieved ahead of a 2012 deadline.

The reasons for improvement in the road fatality statistics have been attributed to the creation of the Road Safety Authority in 2006 which has provided a strong administrative and leadership role, and consequential road safety policy. Ireland's success was built largely on the adoption and effective implementation of the Government Road Safety Strategic Plans 1998-2006 and 2007-2012. One of the most important measures was the introduction of Mandatory Alcohol Testing in 2006 and tougher penalties for drink driving offences in 2007. Success has also been underlined by hard-hitting mass media campaigns to change attitudes and behaviour towards drinking and driving. A number of

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complementary initiatives around car safety, seat belt wearing, greater monitoring by the Gardai, and improved roads were also critical to the successful implementation of the road safety policy. These required a number of agencies to work together towards a common goal. In addition, agencies had to report to the Minister on a regular basis on progress made on their area of responsibility.

Key message: Strong leadership is essential for implementation, and can encourage a culture of ownership and participation in the implementation process by stakeholders. Effective implementation of legislation, real coordination between agencies and strong accountability mechanisms are also critical.

Figure 3 Example of **policy** implementation

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme provides a free year of early childhood care and education for children of pre-school age. The introduction of the "free" pre-school year is a major development in the area of early childhood education. As a universal scheme, it is hoped that all children will be able to benefit from a pre-school place in this important development year before they commence national school. Children are eligible for the ECCE scheme if they are aged between 3 years 2 months and 4 years 7 months on 1 September of the year that they will be starting. The scheme came into effect on the 1 January 2010. Success of this innovation is illustrated by the uptake of eligible children. Approximately 65,000 children, which constitutes roughly 95% of the eligible cohort of children, are availing of this free pre-school year. Child Care Committees in each county played a key role in disseminating information to childcare services and to parents about the new scheme and the terms of participation.

Key message: A number of implementation enablers led to the effective implementation and high uptake of this scheme. The enablers included supportive organisational structures and systems, consulting the evidence base about 'what works', leadership from the then Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, and strong communication of the initiative which helped garner public support for it.

Figure 4 Example of **programme** implementation

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Incredible Years Programme

The Incredible Years Programme has been delivered in a community context in a number of counties in the Republic of Ireland, including Limerick, Galway and Louth. The Incredible Years programmes are designed to prevent and treat emotional and behavioural difficulties in children aged 3 to 10 years. In Limerick, 34 organisations have provided training to 200 teachers, and delivered programmes to 800 parents. In Galway, the programme has been delivered to 253 parents, and in Louth 300 teachers have been trained to deliver programmes across 9 schools. *Incredible Years* was selected due to the large evidence base that exists demonstrating its effectiveness and the fact that it facilitates training for a broad population base - including separate training programmes for parents, children and teachers.

Over 30 years *Incredible Years* has been subjected to rigorous evaluation. Research results from programme evaluations show that this programme found fewer behaviour problems such as negative physical behaviour, restlessness, and reduction in hyperactive-type behaviours in children.

Key message: Archways, the organisation which has supported the implementation of *Incredible Years* in the Republic of Ireland with a range of partners, has identified strong leadership, partnerships and inter-agency cooperation as essential for the implementation of the programme. Building staff capacity is seen as pivotal in ensuring that the desired outcomes are achieved, as well as applying systematic monitoring and evaluation to confirm positive indicators of effectiveness.

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What the research tells us

There is an emerging body of research that defines the key components and processes involved in effective and successful implementation. In particular, the research indicates that the implementation process is accompanied by distinct stages of development and particular activities.

Stages of implementation

The research shows that implementation is a process that takes time and occurs in incremental stages, each requiring different conditions and activities. Different authors assign different labels and meanings to the various stages of implementation. In summary, however, the research points to four stages of implementation. The first two stages (stages 1 & 2) involve exploratory and planning activities. Following this, the innovation is implemented (stage 3), before it is fully embedded in the system and evaluated (stage 4). Each stage is essential to the implementation process and cannot be skipped. However, those implementing the innovation may need to revisit earlier stages to address challenges, and ensure continued support and capacity. Implementers must also be mindful of adopting

realistic timeframes. The literature indicates that completing the four stages of implementation (stages 1-4) typically takes 2-4 years. The four stages, as understood by CES, are illustrated and described below.

Figure 5 Stages of implementation
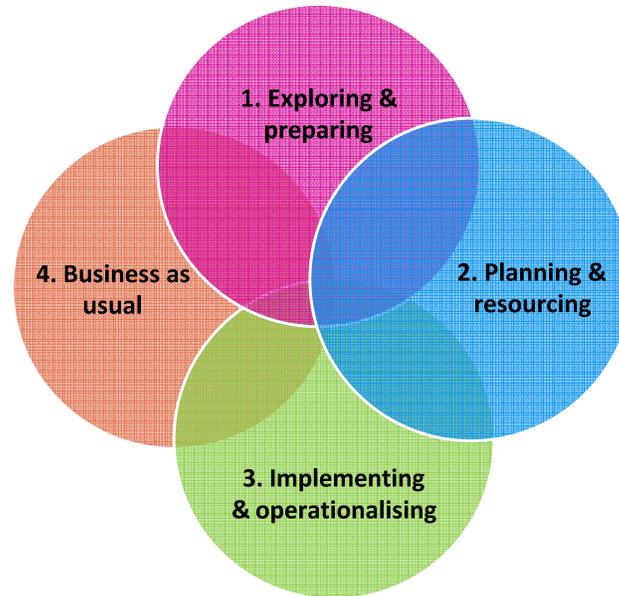
Source: Adapted by CES from Fixsen et al. (2005)

Stage 1 - Exploring and Preparing

At this initial stage of the process an organisation or government department is deciding what innovation to implement. Activities in this phase typically focus on assessing the needs of those affected by the innovation, the fit and feasibility of the innovation, and the internal capacity or readiness for implementing it. In policy implementation, this is often the point at which the policy is developed. In service or programme implementation, this is the point at which the innovation is selected.

During this first phase, steps should also be taken to foster a supportive climate for implementation, and secure buy-in through **consultation with key stakeholders**, including organisational leaders, front-line staff and the public. Champions should also be identified to support and drive the innovation.

The hexagon in Figure 6 illustrates the factors that need to be assessed before adopting and implementing an innovation.

Figure 6 Innovation assessment tool

Identify the needs of those who will be interacting with the innovation through consultation and research

Assess capacity (staffing, finance, structures, buy-in)

Need

Capacity to Implement

Fit

Assess the innovations fit with current initiatives, priorities, structures and values.

Innovation Readiness

Resource Availability

Ensure the innovation is ready to be implemented and the internal expertise exists to implement it.

Evidence

Identify necessary resources (IT, staffing, training, data systems, coaching & supervision, administrative & system supports)

Consult the evidence on what works, with whom, and what is cost effective.

Source: Adapted by CES from the Intervention Assessment Tool developed by the National Implementation Research Network, USA, 2009

The exploration stage ends when the decision has been made to adopt a particular innovation.

Stage 2 - Planning and Resourcing

At the end of this stage, there should be a clear plan for implementing the innovation, and a team of qualified individuals identified, who will take responsibility for guiding the process. The implementation plan should include a clear delivery model, outlining the inputs, outputs and outcomes (see a more detailed explanation of an implementation plan in the next section).

Responsibilities are assigned and preparatory activities begin, in order to ensure that the necessary structural changes are in place to incorporate the innovation. This may involve securing funding, hiring and training staff, and arranging any necessary resources.

Stage 3 - Implementing and Operationalising

This is the first time the innovation is put into effect. It may be delivered initially on a pilot basis before being rolled out. The following activities are undertaken during this phase:

- Providing on-going coaching and assistance to staff
- Monitoring on-going implementation
- Changing systems / culture, as necessary
- Explaining and communicating why the innovation is necessary and what it will look like when implemented.
- Creating feedback mechanisms to inform future actions

This stage should be guided by the implementation plan, which should be shared with all those responsible for delivery, monitoring and evaluation. The implementation plan should be regularly reviewed and updated.

Expectations may be high at this time, and stakeholders may become disheartened if the innovation is progressing slowly. It is important for leaders to manage expectations and ensure the necessary preparation has been done in order to move the innovation through this difficult stage.

Stage 4 - Business as usual

At this final stage, the innovation is mainstreamed and fully operational. It has become culturally embedded and outcomes are ready to be evaluated. This will occur when the core components of implementation are in place, and the necessary time and resources have been invested. This stage provides the opportunity to reflect upon the overall process and learn from the experience so as to inform future organisational and policy decisions. On-going monitoring is necessary to ensure that the innovation is maintained throughout the system.
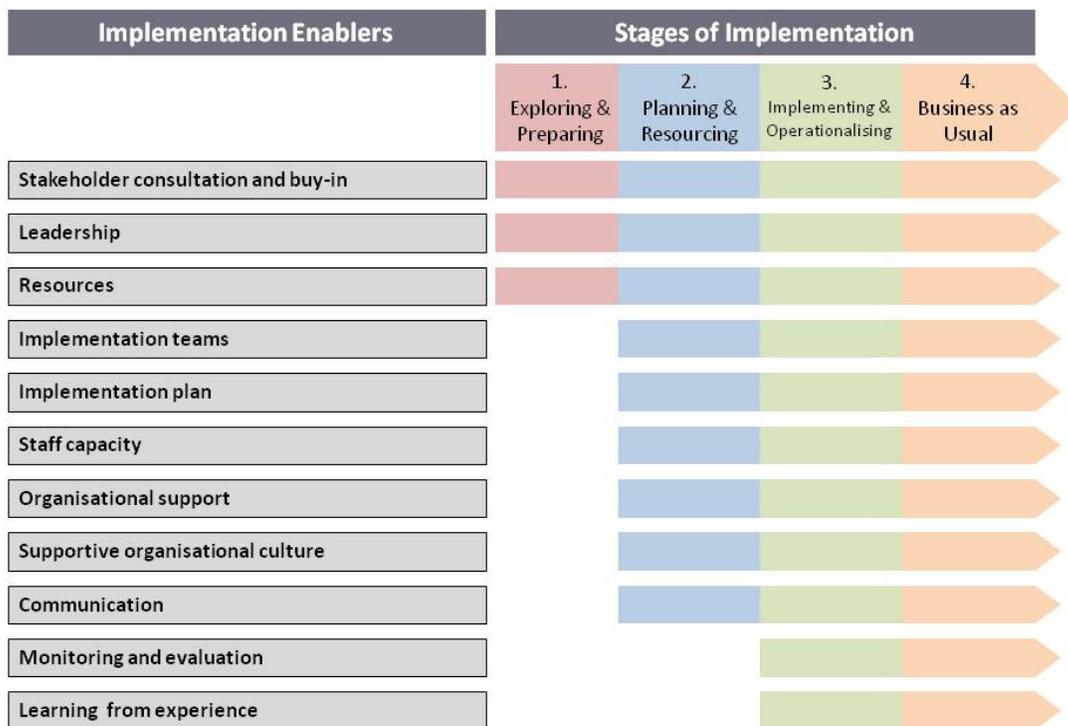
Enablers of implementation

Another trend in the implementation literature is the examination of the factors which facilitate effective implementation. A range of terms are used in the literature to refer to these factors, including implementation enablers, drivers, facilitators and the core components of implementation. For the sake of simplicity, we refer to them here as implementation enablers.

Despite the field not yet reaching a consensus on the exact enablers, certain factors emerge consistently from the research, as illustrated in Figure 7. What is also clear is that certain implementation enablers are required throughout different stages in the process to drive implementation, and that the integration of these factors is vital to implementation success. The relative importance of each of the implementation enablers will vary depending on the innovation being implemented, and the context and setting in which it is implemented. Key

implementation enablers and the stages at which they typically come into play are illustrated and described below.

Figure 7: Implementation enablers and stages

Implementation Enablers	Stages of Implementation			
	1. Exploring & Preparing	2. Planning & Resourcing	3. Implementing & Operationalising	4. Business as Usual
Stakeholder consultation and buy-in	■	■	■	■
Leadership	■	■	■	■
Resources	■	■	■	■
Implementation teams		■	■	■
Implementation plan		■	■	■
Staff capacity		■	■	■
Organisational support		■	■	■
Supportive organisational culture		■	■	■
Communication		■	■	■
Monitoring and evaluation			■	■
Learning from experience			■	■

Stakeholder consultation and buy-in

Consulting with all relevant stakeholders is vital for successful implementation. It allows those implementing the innovation to assess current needs, the fit and feasibility of the innovation, and levels of capacity and readiness. Consultation is also critical in terms of identifying, acknowledging and addressing any resistance which exists to the implementation being implemented. Involving communities, citizens and politicians in the selection and evaluation of the innovation helps to create awareness about the innovation and should generate buy-in for it.

Leadership

A variety of terms are used to discuss the issue of leadership in the literature. These include implementation champions, leaders and leadership. Implementation leaders or champions are the early adopters of change. They take positive action to encourage others to participate in the implementation process, and provide direction and vision for implementation and overcoming challenges that occur during the process.

Resources

Securing appropriate funding, staff with the requisite skills, and other necessary resources are all identified as key to successful implementation.

Implementation teams

Implementation teams are a core group of individuals who have special expertise in implementation and in the policy, service or programme being implemented. They are accountable for guiding the overall implementation process and building internal capacity to manage change. They provide support at system, programme and practice levels. Implementation teams can range in size depending on the scale of the change and the resources available. They will usually be multi-disciplinary, with members potentially coming from within or outside the organisation. It is essential that team members possess the appropriate skills, time and decision-making responsibility to ensure effectiveness.

A key message regarding implementation teams is that it is essential to involve all those with responsibility for making the changes happen. The functions of implementation teams include:

- Moving the project through the stages of implementation
- Identifying barriers and finding solutions
- Identifying facilitators and institutionalising them
- Engaging with stakeholders and community
- Engaging in data-based decision making

Implementation plan

Systematic and structured implementation planning is essential. An implementation plan sets out clearly the objectives of the innovation, specific tasks relating to its implementation, the individuals responsible for accomplishing these tasks and agreed timelines. It should clearly articulate the inputs, outputs and outcomes in the process and how these relate to one another. Further points of consideration include risk management and monitoring and reporting requirements.

An implementation plan enhances accountability during implementation, identifies potential obstacles to implementation and guides the action required by all parties to promote and support effective implementation. The implementation plan should be revised on a regular basis to ensure it is guiding the process effectively.

Staff capacity

Building staff capacity is a core component of implementation and is pivotal in ensuring that the desired outcomes are achieved. Careful staff selection, quality training and on-going coaching and assistance are all crucial in building capacity in staff for effective implementation.

Organisational support

Supportive organisational structures and systems are crucial in helping staff implement innovations. Organisational support means having systems, policies and procedures in place within the organisation which align with the innovation, and which inform assessment and decision-making. For example, having good human resource and industrial relations mechanisms in place can facilitate implementation and minimise resistance to change.

Supportive organisational culture

An organisational culture is the norms, values and beliefs that exist within an organisation. For an innovation to be successfully implemented, it must become culturally embedded within the organisation or system. If the organisational culture is at odds with the innovation, those implementing the innovation must seek behavioural and attitudinal change within the organisation to ensure effective implementation. This can be a long process and requires the unlearning of the existing culture, and the relearning of a new one. Communicating a compelling vision for the change, providing training, positive role models and support groups are also vital in supporting this change.

Communication with staff

Effective, on-going communication is critical in motivating staff, overcoming resistance to change and giving and receiving feedback. It is also essential for building and maintaining trust among staff. Having internal systems and processes which support effective communication is, therefore, vital.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are essential to determine whether desired indicators are being met and outcomes being achieved. Such activities also help to identify risks to implementation and inform future actions. Appropriate reporting and review mechanisms must be in place to facilitate this process.

Learning from experience

Identifying and delivering 'early wins' and demonstrating where the innovation is working well helps to build credibility and buy-in, and enables staff, service users and stakeholders to learn from experience. Reflecting upon the overall implementation process, during the final stages of implementation, allows implementers to identify strengths and weaknesses that occurred during the process so as to inform and improve future applications.

Barriers to Implementation

The literature also identifies a number of factors which hinder the implementation process. If the barriers to implementation are identified early on, then actions can be taken (often through one of the 'enablers' discussed in the previous section) to overcome these barriers. The barriers to implementation can be summarised under three headings.

External environment

The external environment may hinder implementation if existing structures and processes are not in line with the implementation of the innovation. Policy cycles, for example, are relatively short in nature, and are often out of kilter with the longer implementation process. This can make it difficult to maintain the impetus for implementation. Existing research, theories and practices can also influence implementation.

Resistance to change

Implementers may meet resistance from those delivering the innovation, which can impede its implementation. Such resistance can be caused by leaders making changes before stakeholders are ready, and before the innovation and organisational culture are fully aligned. If this occurs, some stakeholders may perceive the change initiative as social coercion or control by leaders.

Leaders can create readiness by consulting all stakeholders in the decision-making process, by giving clear direction on the change, and by acknowledging and validating concerns stakeholders may have.

Vested interests

The interests of those involved in delivering an innovation, including, for example, staff, managers, lobby groups, trade unions and professional bodies, can negatively affect its implementation. This can occur when the vested interests of these stakeholders are incongruent with the innovation. Similarly, having a vested interest in the successful implementation of the innovation can also act as a barrier, if it brings it in a new direction. This can occur when politicians attempt to influence the innovation in favour of their own constituency.

Section 3: Main Schools of Thought on Implementation

There is no definitive theory of implementation or no single framework commonly accepted in the field. However, as explained in Section 2, there is significant commonality in the messages emerging from the research on implementation. This section looks at some of the schools of thought on implementation, presented in chronological order from the 1970s to today.

It is important to acknowledge the significant body of knowledge and theory available on management, change management, organisational development, and the policy development cycle that is also relevant and useful to consider when implementing an innovation.

Policy Implementation Deficit
One of the first studies to systematically explore this field looked at the policy implementation shortfall. In 1973, Pressman and Wildasky argued that successful implementation was reliant upon good linkages between levels of government and organisations at local level. Where these linkages are fractured or missing the result is an '**implementation deficit**'. **Pressman and Wildasky, 1973**

Policy Implementation – Top-down or bottom-up debate
In the 1980s, a number of researchers contributed to the implementation debate. These contributions fell into two categories, referred to as either the top-down or bottom-up debate on policy implementation. One of the most widely quoted **top-down** approaches put forward a framework for looking at implementation that identified sixteen variables under three headings:
- Factors affecting the 'tractability' of the problem (factors of the target group and the degree of behavioural change required)
- Ability of the statute (legislation) to structure implementation
- Non-statutory variables affecting implementation.

Proponents of the **bottom-up** debate argue that frontline staff are in fact the implementers, often taking into account the needs of citizens and 'clients' in implementing policy. One of the most cited authors of this bottom-up approach is Michael Lipsky. Lipsky took the view that frontline staff in policy delivery agencies, what he calls 'street-level bureaucrats', had a critical role in implementing policy. With a focus on public services, Lipsky argued that 'street level bureaucrats', because of local circumstances, had to make adjustments to policy dictat from above. Others considered the bottom-up debate in relation to implementation structures, formed from 'within pools of organisations' and through 'processes of consensual self-selection'. They argue that policy implementation depends on

compromises between individuals and organisations responsible for implementation actions. **Sabatier and Mazmanian (1983), Lipsky (1980), Barrett & Fudge (1981) Hjern, Barrett and Fudge, and Elmore (1982)**

Communication and Policy Implementation
In his 1990 publication, Goggin promoted a 'communications model' in terms of implementation. He focused on the acceptance or rejection of messages between layers of government. Goggin considers policy-making as an "implementation sub-system full of messages, messengers, channels, and targets operating within a broader communications system". The interpretation of these messages depends on the different settings and contexts in which they are received. Whether or not local government decision-makers decide to act is influenced by their perception of the message and information flowing from national and local levels. **Goggin et al, 1990**

Implementation of Policy - high or low levels of ambiguity and conflict
In the 1990s implementation researchers looked to synthesise approaches. They looked at a 'conflict/ambiguity' approach which is helpful in thinking about different types of policies and the context in which they are being implemented. In essence, it is suggested that policies had high or low ambiguity and high or low levels of conflict, resulting in different types of implementation. **Matland, 1995**

Network Settings and Policy Implementation
In the late 1990's, O'Toole looked at the complexity of institutional structures, focusing on implementing policy in network settings (complex, interconnected groups or systems) and the need for cooperation and coordination in implementing policy in networked situations. This school of thought recognises the main barriers to implementation as being uncertainty, the absence of trust, and weak or limited institutions, concluding that in order to get new policies implemented they need to be accepted into the day-to-day work of those responsible for implementing them. **O'Toole, 1997**

Human Infrastructure for Effective Implementation in Practice and Programmes
In 2005, Fixsen and colleagues carried out a synthesis of the implementation research literature across a wide range of sectors and identified a number of stages and drivers of implementation in practice and programmes. From their synthesis they conclude that 'implementation is synonymous with coordinated change at system, organisation, programme and practice levels, and that the 'essence of implementation is behaviour change'. Therefore they focus on the 'people' aspects of implementation—staff selection, training, coaching and staff evaluation. **Fixen et al, 2005**
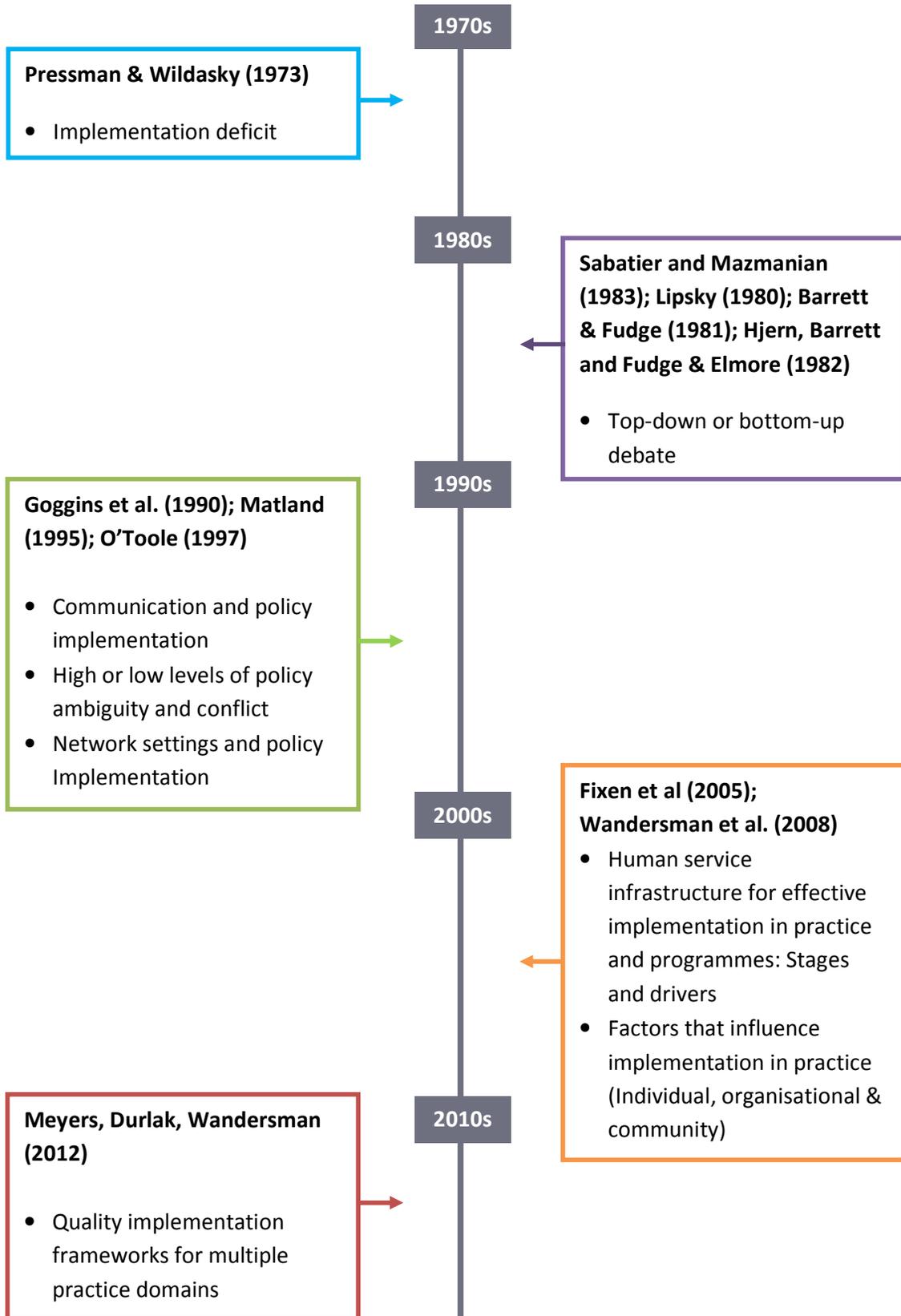
Factors that Influence Implementation in Practice Settings

In 2008, Wandersman and colleagues identified three factors that influence implementation in practice settings including **Individual characteristics, organisational factors and community factors.** In terms of the individual characteristics, they argue that there are key variables associated with implementation including practitioner's education, experience with the same or a similar innovation, and attitude toward the innovation or the motivation to use it. In terms of organisational factors, they have linked a variety of organisational characteristics to successful implementation including: leadership; programme goals/vision, commitment and size; skills for planning, implementation, and evaluation; climate, structure, and innovation-specific factors such as access to information about the innovation, and organisational support for implementation. Community-level factors relevant to the implementation of programmes include community capacity, community readiness for prevention, community competence, community empowerment, social capital, and collective efficacy. These factors focus on the importance of connections within the community, resources, leadership, participation, sense of community, and the willingness to intervene directly in community problems. **Wandersman et al. 2008**

Quality Implementation Frameworks for Multiple Practice Domains

In 2012, Meyers, Durlak, and Wandersman synthesised twenty-five implementation frameworks and suggested that there are similar steps in the implementation process regardless of the type of innovation, target population, and desired outcomes. They have developed the **Quality Implementation Framework (QIF)**, which provides a conceptual overview of the critical steps that comprise the process of quality implementation. The Quality Implementation Framework contains four phases and fourteen coordinated steps and offers a useful blueprint. For example, the Quality Implementation Framework indicates that quality implementation is best achieved by thinking about the implementation process systematically as a series of these steps and that multiple activities, including assessment, collaboration and negotiation, monitoring, and self-reflection, are required to enhance the likelihood that the desired goals of the innovation will be achieved. **Meyers, Durlak, Wandersman, 2012**

Figure 8: Timeline for some of the main schools of thought on implementation

1970s

Pressman & Wildasky (1973)

- Implementation deficit

1980s

Sabatier and Mazmanian (1983); Lipsky (1980); Barrett & Fudge (1981); Hjern, Barrett and Fudge & Elmore (1982)

- Top-down or bottom-up debate

1990s

Goggins et al. (1990); Matland (1995); O'Toole (1997)

- Communication and policy implementation
- High or low levels of policy ambiguity and conflict
- Network settings and policy Implementation

2000s

Fixen et al (2005); Wandersman et al. (2008)

- Human service infrastructure for effective implementation in practice and programmes: Stages and drivers
- Factors that influence implementation in practice (Individual, organisational & community)

2010s

Meyers, Durlak, Wandersman (2012)

- Quality implementation frameworks for multiple practice domains

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Websites

The Centre for Effective Services

http://www.effectiveservices.org/implementation

The Colebrook Centre for Evidence and Implementation

http://www.cevi.org.uk/

NIRN - National Implementation Research Network

http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/

Section 5: Glossary of Terms

Accountability
The ability to demonstrate to key stakeholders that an innovation works and that it uses resources effectively to achieve and sustain projected goals and outcomes

Buy-in
Commitment to, and support for an innovation

Consultation
The process of asking key stakeholders for their views on a specific topic, and actively involving them in the decision-making process

Fidelity
The degree to which the activities undertaken in a programme are true to the design of the original programme on which it is based

Implementation
The carrying out of a plan for doing something

Implementation barrier
Any component that hinders the implementation process

Implementation champions or leaders
Individuals who provide direction and guidance to implementation efforts, and who take positive action to encourage others to participate in the implementation process

Implementation enabler
Any component that facilitates the implementation process

Implementation gap
The missing link that exists between the design of a policy, service or practice and its subsequent delivery (ie. the difference between what is known in theory and what is done in practice)

Implementation plan
A plan which sets out clearly how an innovation should be implemented. It should contain specific tasks relating to implementation, the individuals responsible for accomplishing these tasks, agreed timelines, and monitoring and evaluation requirements.

Implementation science

The study of the best methods for improving implementation quality

Implementation teams

A core group of individuals who have special expertise in implementation, and who are accountable for guiding the overall implementation process and building internal capacity to manage change

Innovation

A policy, programme, service or practice being implemented

Inputs

Resources made available to an innovation to help it achieve its goals

Leadership

The capacity to provide direction and vision for implementation and overcoming challenges that occur during the process

Monitoring

A process of assessing whether agreed inputs have been made and whether key targets for the innovation have been achieved (for example, counting how many people use a service over a given period of time)

Organisational culture

The norms, values and beliefs that exist within an organisation

Organisational support

Structures and systems within an organisation that are aligned with, and which promote effective implementation

Outcome

The changes for service users, citizens, or other targets of change that happen as a result of an innovation being provided. The outcomes of an innovation identify what is hoped to be accomplished, and provide a consistent framework for agencies and groups to work towards in order to achieve the change required.

Outcome evaluation

Systematic process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data to assess what results an innovation has achieved

Output

Number of units of service provided, such as the number of parent education classes

Policy implementation

A series of activities undertaken by government to achieve the goals and objectives articulated in policy statements

Programme implementation

A set of purposeful activities undertaken to incorporate the core components of a programme into service or community settings

Resistance to change

A reaction in individuals and organisations in response to anything that interrupts the status quo, which causes them to be reluctant to adopt changes

Staff capacity

Staff that have the skills and competence to ensure desired outcomes are achieved

Stakeholder

An individual or organisation with a direct or indirect interest or investment in an innovation (e.g. a funder, staff, programme champion or community leader)

Vested interests

A special interest in an existing system, arrangement, or institution for particular personal reasons