

# INFLUENCING POLICIES FINGAL PPN

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# *Social Justice Ireland and PPNs*



- *Social Justice Ireland* is an **independent think-tank** which works to build a just society where human rights are respected, human dignity is protected, human development is facilitated and the environment is valued and protected.
- It provides independent social analysis and effective policy development and options to **create a sustainable future for every member of society and for societies as a whole.**
- It seeks to ensure that **every person has a genuine voice** in shaping the decisions that affect them, and that every person can contribute to the development of society.
- Seán Healy Director of *SJI* chaired the Task force on Citizen Engagement in 2013.
- *SJI* runs a range of support programmes for PPNs.
- Free Associate Membership of *SJI* for PPN members

# Introductions



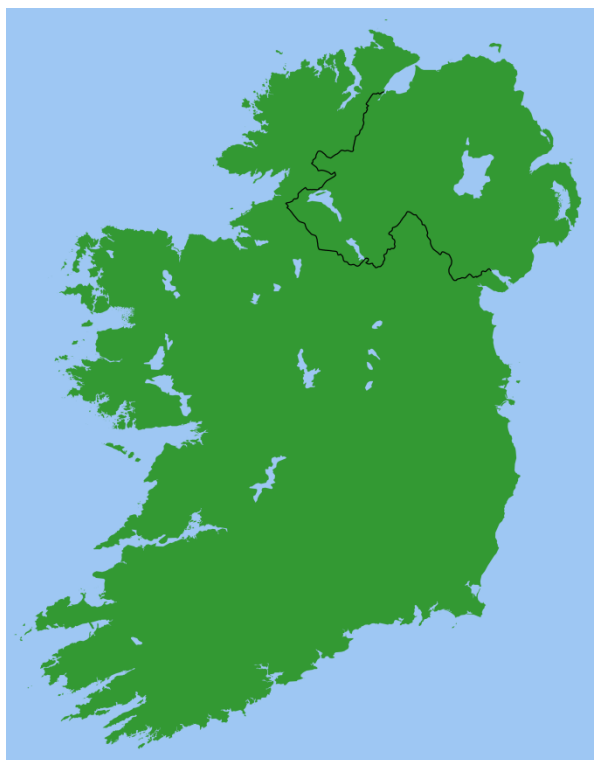
- Name
- Boards / Committees you sit on
- A policy area you are passionate about

# Why are we here?

- Local vs National Policy
- Setting policy objectives
- Creating and evaluating alternatives
- Strategies for influencing policy
- Discussion



# Policy



**National**

**to**

**Local**

# Policy Cycle



# Post Factual Society?

- Debate framed on emotion
- Rejection of facts as “too complex”, “for boffins” etc.



- **MUST** be challenged with critical thinking.
- Need for Evidence based policy
- Need for Deliberative Democracy

# Challenges to Policy Change

- **Administrative concerns / resistance**
  - We've always done it this way
  - We don't have the staff / skills / resources
  - Potential domino effect on other policies
    - eg increase minimum wage => change PRSI and med card limits.
- **Time constraints**
  - We need it NOW
  - The Dept / EU say we have to decide next week
- **Ideology**
  - Our belief system says ..... so that's what we do
- **Vested Interests**
  - Formal – lobbying
  - Informal – Golden Circles



# Why Evidence Based Policy for PPNs?

- **Positives**
  - Bring forward PPNs unique perspective
  - Agenda Setting
  - Proactive rather than reactive
  - Innovation
  - Achieving real change
- **Challenges**
  - Time consuming
  - Needs skills and some resources
  - Paralysis by analysis

# Possible Policy Objectives

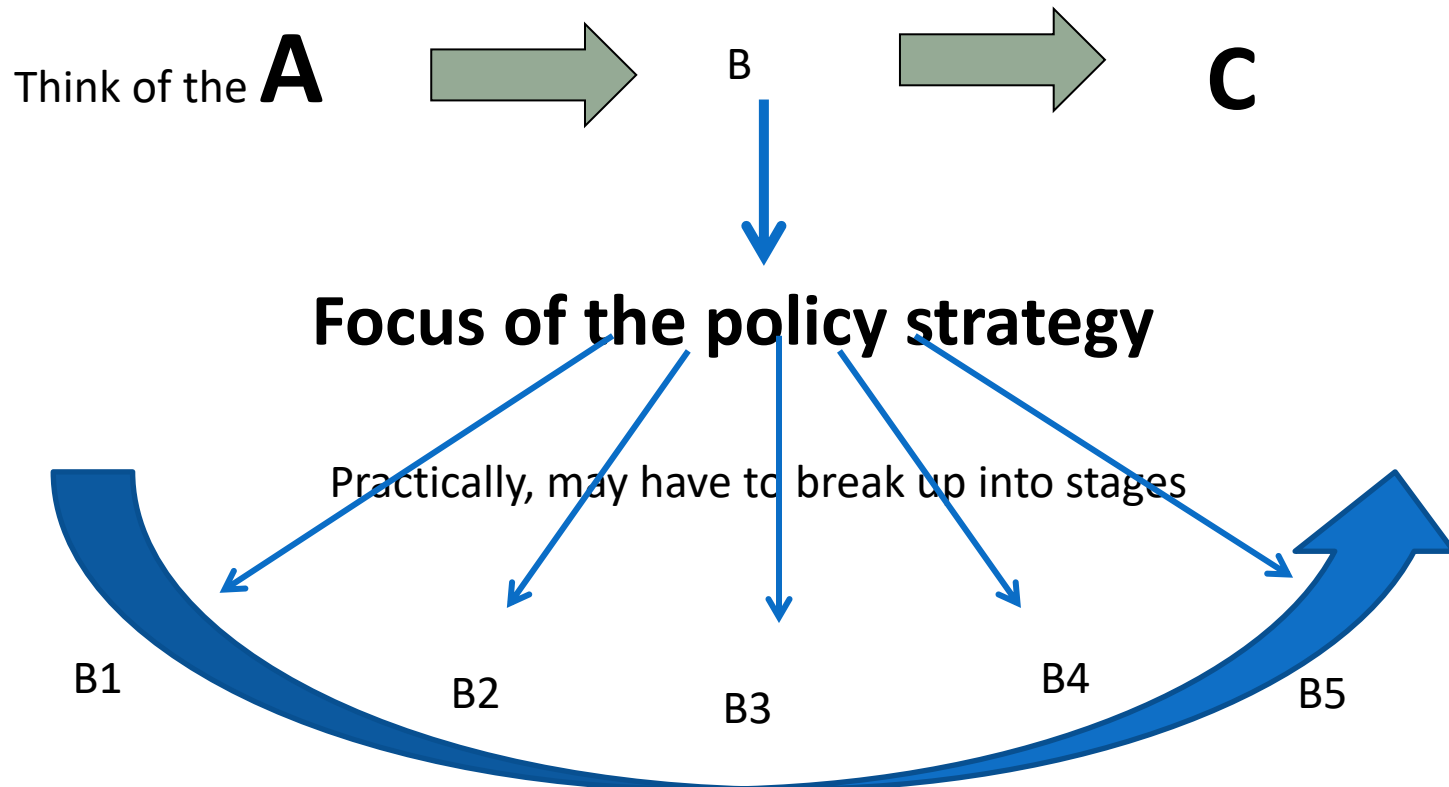
- **Placing an issue on the Policy Agenda.**
- **Policy Development**
- **Policy Adoption / Blocking** - eg by Councillors
- **Policy Implementation** Proper implementation of a policy, along with the funding, resources, or quality assurance to ensure it.
- **Policy Monitoring and Evaluation** Tracking a policy to ensure it is implemented properly and achieves its intended impacts.
- **Policy Maintenance** Preventing cuts or other negative changes to a policy.



# **PATHWAYS TO INFLUENCING POLICY**

# Defining the path

- What is the problem / issue (A)?
- What is your vision / Theory of Change (C)
- What is needed to make it happen



# Worksheet 1

- **In groups (with similar themes)**
- **Briefly:**
  - Name an issue which is can be addressed at local level
  - Identify the current situation / impact of current policy
  - Identify the change you want to see in the impact

# A) Defining the current reality

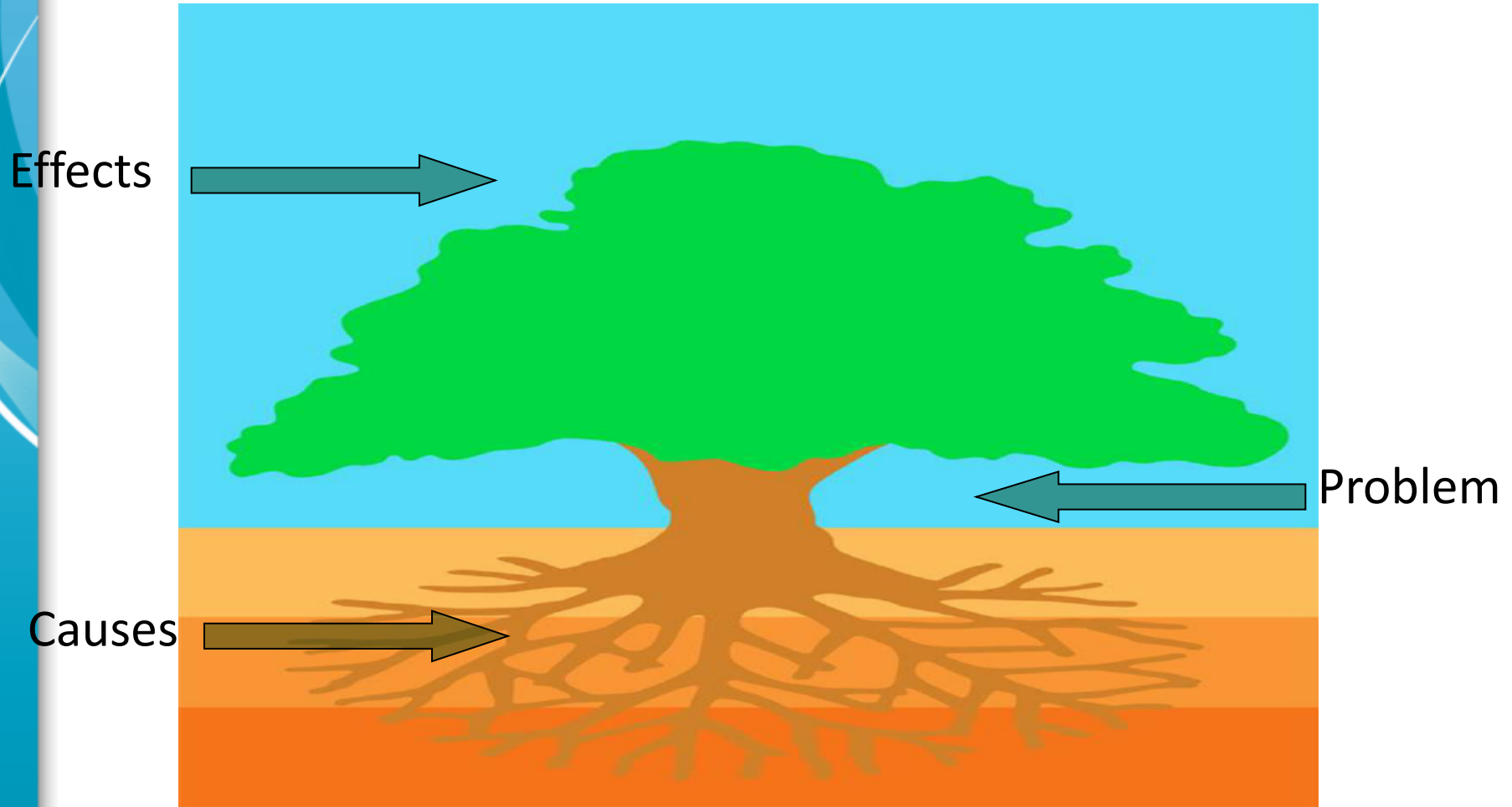
- **Be specific and evidence based**
  - What is it?
  - What causes it?
  - Why is it an issue?
  - Who is it an issue for?
  - How big an issue is it?
  - What research and evidence exists about it?
  - What are the key policies / practices impacting on the issue?
  - What are the impacts of those policies (Intended and unintended)?
  - How are decisions made in this area?
  - What are the root causes: social, cultural, political, economic?



# A: Defining the current reality

- **Where are we and why are we here?**
- **Social**
- **Economic**
- **Culture**
- **Political**
- **Sustainability**

# Problem Tree Analysis; Defining the Problem





# Sources of Information

- **External**
  - Fingal Co Co <http://www.fingalcoco.ie/>
  - Annual Budget <http://www.fingalcoco.ie/your-council/budgets-expenditure-and-financial-statements/annual-budget/>
  - How it compares <http://localauthorityfinances.com/>
  - Maps <http://www.maps.pobal.ie>
  - Central Statistics Office <http://www.cso.ie>
  - Relevant Government Departments
- **Internal**
  - PPN linkage group experiences from the ground
  - Can you gather relevant data?

# Sources of research support

- **Own research / knowledge base within PPN**
- **Existing publications**
- **Co-operation with 3<sup>rd</sup> level college**
  - Formal research
  - Student placement
  - Student project
- **Co-operation with agencies**
  - Co Co
  - ETB
  - Local Development Companies

# Worksheet 2

- **Based on the identified issue**
  - Give more detail on the current situation / impact of current policy
  - How would you gather data?
  - What sources would you use?
  - What else would you need?

# C:Defining the change you want to see

## Vision

(vīzh'ən) *n.*

1. An imagined idea or a goal toward which one aspires.

- **Reflecting values of human dignity, respect, equality, justice, sustainability etc**
  - What do you want to see in the long term?
  - How would the lives of people in your target group be different?
  - Who might lose out?
  - How would society benefit?
  - How does that translate into practicalities and policy?
- **Short, clear statement**

# Worksheet 3

- **Based on the identified issue**
- **Short clear statement**
  - What do you want to see in the long term?
  - How would the lives of people in your target group be different?
  - How would society as a whole benefit?

# B: How are we going to get there?



# Construct alternative policies

- **Look for alternative options**
  - Parallel situation / pilot project/existing
  - New ideas
  - Proposals from other groups / counties / countries
- **Project the outcomes / impacts**
  - For Target Group
  - For all stakeholders including wider society
  - What knock on impact would it have for other policies?
- **Budget**
  - Costs
  - Sources of Finance



# Evaluating the alternatives

- Are they realistic? Workable? Possible in current reality.
- What is the realistic timeframe?
- What are the benefits and to whom?
- What's the cost benefit analysis / social return on investment?
- Is there a realistic funding source?
- Does the policy/solution you are proposing have influential opposition or support? How powerful are those influencers? Can you address their concerns?



# Worksheet 4

- **Based on the identified issue**
  - Identify a couple of policy proposals
  - How would you evaluate them?
  - What sources would you use?
  - What else would you need?



# **INFLUENCING POLICY**

# Who are the Target Audiences?

- **Who are potential allies?**
- **Who is supportive but needs to be convinced?**
- **Who has the power to make it happen?**
- **Who is “on the fence” with the inertia to slow progress**
- **Who has the power to stop it happening?**
  
- **What motivates all of the above?**
  
- **Tailor your message to different groups**



# Building support

- **Talk to people (both supporters and opponents)**
- **Listen to people (both supporters and opponents)**
- **Build alliances**
- **Be willing to compromise (?)**

# Variety of methods

- **What**
  - Clear message
  - Use research and analysis
  - Use case studies / Personal stories from target groups
- **Where**
  - Boards and Committees with PPN reps
  - Consultations / Submissions
  - Public Meetings
  - Direct Lobbying
  - Presenting research
  - Media
- **Follow up and persistence!!!!**

# Worksheet 5

- **Based on the identified issue**
  - Two different groups you would target?
  - Why for each?
  - What approach would you take?
  - What resources would you need?

# Monitoring and evaluation

- **Continue to monitor research and develop your own research**
- **How is the policy being implemented?**
- **Is it having the expected impact?**
  - Better that you know the answer before your opponents do!
- **Are there unexpected impacts?**
- **Does it need to be reviewed?**

# Conclusion

- **PPNs have opportunity to set the agenda and bring policies to the table**
- **BUT**
- **It takes work and commitment**
- **BUT**
- **It can create real sustainable change**
  
- **GOOD LUCK**





# Thank you

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