

# Inclusion upon preparation of development plan

## Case analysis “Development plan for reducing violence for 2011–2014”

### Background information

This case analysis provides an overview of the inclusion in policy-making process at the example of the development plan “Development plan for reducing violence for 2011—2014”, in charge of which is the Ministry of Justice, but which is prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So far the inclusion studies in Estonia have rather concentrated on the attitudes, skills and preparation relating to the inclusion of the officials and interest groups; less attention has been paid to the actual course of an inclusion process from the beginning to the end – what questions, issues, choices and decisions are faced by the officials as including persons and by various organisations. To sum it up, the main aspects that need to be improved and recommendations both for including persons and included persons are brought out – a more detailed report is available at [www.ngo.ee/tof](http://www.ngo.ee/tof).

### Carrying out an analysis

The inclusion case has been analysed starting from the adoption of the preparation of terms of reference of the new development plan in the work plan of the Ministry of Justice until the planned approval of the development plan by the Government of the Republic – from April 2009 to March 2010. The analysis was carried out by Praxis; the methods applied were initial questioning at the beginning of the work of work groups, final questioning after the inclusion, monitoring of the meetings of work groups, followed by interviews with the including persons and included persons, and at the end of the inclusion process, a reflection seminar was organised with the participation of including persons and included persons in order to evaluate the inclusion process.

### Specific character of the inclusion case

This is quite an ordinary inclusion situation experienced by many Estonian officials, whose duties include the preparation of development plans; therefore, many people could draw conclusions from these lessons. The difficulties of this case that might constrain inclusion and that are not very typical in the inclusion situations are the inclusion of several ministries, wide range of included persons, inadequate skills of the including persons, and lack of clarity as to the purpose of inclusion.

### Good practices upon inclusion

- \* **This development plan set out to consolidate the long-term goals of several fields.** In 2009, two development plans coordinated by the Ministry of Justice were concluded: “Development plan for combating trafficking in human beings for 2006—2009” and “Development plan for reduction of juvenile delinquency for 2007—2009”. The main topics of both development plans were included in the development patterns of criminal policy, but several additional fields appeared, the situation of which needed improvement, e.g. child abuse, including via cyberspace, committed sexual offences, child trafficking, and children unaccompanied by adults. In addition, several new topics calling for constant attention emerged, which have been paid less attention to in the earlier development plans, e.g. the issue of domestic violence. These topics were tried to be included in the new single development plan for reducing violence, and cover this way the fight against violence in the society as a whole.
- \* **Wide range of included persons.** The wide range of included persons consisted of target groups whose life is directly influenced by the methods of the development plan, a wide group of service providers, and the officials who come into contact with the victims of violence. The leaders of work groups are of the same opinion that the most important factor upon choosing the persons included in the preparation of the development plan was that the included interest group would represent one's field and target group and that there had been a previous cooperation with this interest group, and that the included interest group would be interested in its inclusion. Finally, the preparation of the development plan was divided between four sectoral work groups: child abuse, juvenile crime, human trafficking, and domestic violence. It is interesting to note that two work groups were led by the officials of the Ministry of Social Affairs, for whom it meant additional tasks in addition to their own duties.
- \* **Innovative methods were dared to be used.** Although the officials who led the inclusion process were not very experienced in inclusion, they were very open-minded about the inclusion methods. They used methods that are not very widespread in Estonia, such as the citizen forum and reflection seminar.

## Policy recommendations

### Recommendations for including persons to plan the inclusion process

- \* **Improve the availability of work and inclusion plans of the ministries for public.** In addition to the homepages of the institution, these could be sent directly to the main partners, to the umbrella organisations active in the administrative field of the ministry/department, and to the organisations active in the field, who are the potential players in the particular development plans.
- \* **Ascertain the existence of statistics and studies in this field in the preparation phase.** Consolidating background information during the preparatory work helps avoid the situation where upon inclusion too much time is devoted to collecting existing information during the discussions, and therefore less time is left for analysing the issues and solutions.
- \* **Targeting of inclusion must be well communicated between different parties, they have to come back to the target from time to time, and specify it, if necessary.** It is advisable and necessary to pay special attention to and take into account the time spent on identifying the targets of inclusion, on the one hand, and on clarifying the expectations of the included parties, on the other hand. Mutual introduction of expectations and wishes about the initiated cooperation process helps advance the existent culture of cooperation and meetings, where seeking speed and effectiveness, it is preferred to actively start tackling the topic itself.
- \* **Realistically evaluate one's workload.** The included ministries have to consider critically the workload of the involved officials, contribution of other ministries, and take the inclusion tasks into account in their working schedules.

### Recommendations for including persons to develop their inclusion-related skills

- \* **Inform the participants of the context of policy-making.** In order to create a more constructive dialogue and avoid later discontent, the involving person should familiarise the participants with the policies implemented earlier, possibilities to amend them and state budget limits, and give evaluations as to what extent it is possible to implement the submitted proposals.
- \* **Coordinate the inclusion process within the institution.** If different work groups are used upon preparing a development plan, it is necessary for the leaders of work groups to meet and talk regularly about their progress and the issues they are faced with in connection with the inclusion process and content. This helps share experience, and integrate the topics of the development plan/draft.
- \* **Use the most appropriate inclusion methods, and experiment, if necessary.** Generally, it is advisable to use an approach where in the initial phase of the inclusion more such inclusion methods are used that enable direct communication, immediate contact and more creative work methods – in order to create relationships and increase the common part of understandings. In the later phase of the inclusion, when the phase of the development of the document is reached, it is advisable to use additional written communication, in order to promote the specificity, accuracy and documentation of the entries, and provide feedback. Written inclusion is also appropriate in the situation where some participants cannot attend the meetings and so they would have a chance to express their opinions in writing. Usage of written methods also in the final phase of the process should not fully replace the direct communication.
- \* **Use active listening techniques to direct the discussions.** Upon the preparation of development plan, the participators appreciated that the leaders of work groups were willing to listen to different opinions. However, the participants became sometimes too dominant during the discussions, and some participants felt that not all of their opinions were paid attention to. In order to direct the discussions smoothly, one should use active listening techniques: feedbacking, reflecting, reasking and specifying.

### Recommendations for included persons

- \* **Plan time for participation.** Similarly to including persons, it also very important that the participants plan their time. The first thing to consider is the role the participant plays in the process and how he/she is ready to participate (as an expert of the field, representative of the representative organisation, defender of the interests of the target group, expert of the service provision, etc.). It is advisable to ask from the including officials at the beginning of the inclusion what kind of contribution is expected from the participant and when. If the plans of the officials seem unrealistic at this point and the participant evaluates on the basis of his/her experience that this or that activity takes a different amount of time, he/she should inform the officials of such opinion.
- \* **Do homework before the meeting of work group.** If the participants of the meeting have done their homework, it is possible to hold a more constructive discussion and reach more comprehensive results in a shorter period of time.

- \* **Be constructive in discussions and upon making proposals.** It is advisable to be constructive, steady and not too emotional in discussions. Being too emotional makes the discussion tense, reduces the quality of cooperation atmosphere and discussions and the satisfaction of participants in connection with the process. It is important to keep in mind that all including officials and included associations regard the discussed field as an important one.
- \* **Present reasoned and grounded proposals.** The analysis revealed that the including persons consider the analytical skills of the participants important. Therefore, participation in the preparation of a development plan or legislative act requires practical experience, so that the opinions would not be too theoretical and unreal. At the same time, the practitioners need to have a bigger picture of the things that occur in the field and of the links between different aspects, so it would be possible to make generalisations and not to see the field from one's own perspective only.
- \* **Learn from experience, evaluate one's behaviour and development.** The interviewed representatives of the associations deem it necessary to develop social skills, in order to participate in policy-making processes more capably and efficaciously.

## Connection with the good practices of inclusion

The inclusion principles generally accepted in Estonia are described in the good practices of inclusion [www.ngo.ee/node/278](http://www.ngo.ee/node/278). We highlight some examples from the preparation of the development plan for reducing violence that describe the compliance with the good practices of inclusion. The following principles are concerned with the good practices of inclusion and practical recommendations on the basis of inclusion case.

### Principle – detailed plan of inclusion

- \* **Plan the time schedule and assess risks upon preparing an inclusion plan.** If the participants are expected to coordinate their opinions in their organisations or collect the opinions of their member organisations, then it is more time-consuming than for a single expert to present his/her positions and opinions. Also, the impact of the calendar on the inclusion should be taken into account as it is complicated to carry out activities during public holidays and vacations. Also, it should be assessed what are the risks of major differences among participants that would need additional time during the inclusion. Similarly, the impacts from the institution of the including person or from the political level should be considered that might influence the initial inclusion plan.
- \* **Usage of inclusion plan as means of management.** The earlier the inclusion plan is thought through and put down in writing, the faster the development plan develops into a realistic and detailed plan that serves as an auxiliary device upon inclusion. As the inclusion plan is a management instrument, the amendment of such plan is not something you should be afraid of.

### Principle – intermediary report of the course of inclusion

- \* **Possibilities of using an interim report.** The purpose of a written interim report might be the more precise focus on issues, the solutions of which are to be discussed, and to find out what are the reasons that prevent paying attention to other considered problems (e.g. these problems are discussed upon preparation of other development plans or these problems cannot be solved due to limited possibilities of the state budget). This also reduces the possibility that further discussion becomes diffuse and that some participants have expectations in connection with the process that cannot be met. The preparation of an interim report might also be necessary in order to clarify the solution directions agreed upon: people might have different ideas of the agreements that were discussed orally; therefore, the agreements that are put down in writing are more reliable.

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