

# **Knowledge development for evidence-based support to children of parents with dependency disorders**

**A national, regional and local development program**



**Charli Eriksson, Professor em.,**  
**Public Health Sciences,**  
**Department of Health Sciences, Örebro University**  
**[charli.eriksson@oru.se](mailto:charli.eriksson@oru.se)**

# Partners in the project

- National team at Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR): Gunvor Brännström, Kerstin Bergman ...
- Research team: Charli Eriksson, Ingrid Aurin Edvardsson, Linda Beckman, Jennie Jensen, Anita Larsson, Karolina Meijer (at Örebro University during the projects 2013-15),
- Co-researcher: Britta Johnsson, Cecilia Moore, Elisabeth B. Andersson, Ewa Kjell
- All professionals and family members participating in interviews and national project meetings ....

# Background



Children living in families with dependency problems face challenges in their daily not just with regards to future alcohol abuse.

Disclosure of dependency problem by the child to a person outside the family is seen as difficult. There is a need for ethnically sensitive, gender-aware, and beneficial modes of intervention that respect the child or adolescent. (Tinnfält, Eriksson, Brunnberg, 2011).

## Background ...

Only 22 percent of children in families where one parent was in treatment for their dependency got any support and many of these children had already developed own problems (Raninen & Leifman, 2014).

It links to several of themes: promotion of health and welfare, resilience and evidence-based support.

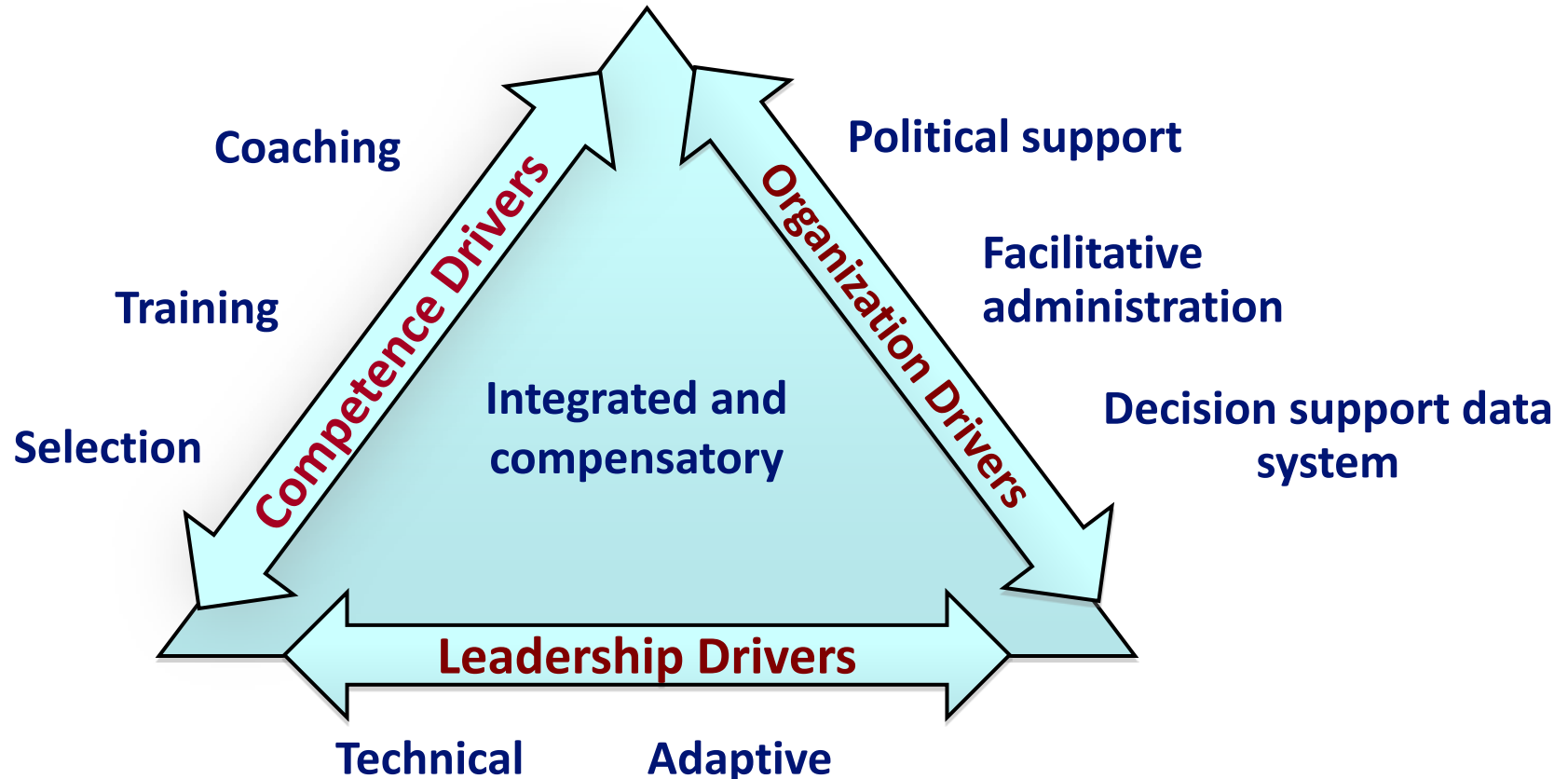
# National initiative

- The **Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)** started a development process
  - involving 15 regions/county councils and 40 municipalities with
  - the aim of improving the support to children, parents and families by social services through improved collaboration between children and adult social service
- (Eriksson ao, 2014).

**Improved support and help for persons**



**Performance assessment (Fidelity)**



# Objectives/Outcomes:

- This presentation will describe the implementation structure and the implementation processes that were developed.
- Voices from professionals, parents and children will be given.
- Moreover, lessons learned during the collaborative work will be shared.

## Methods:

- A participatory practice-based research program was developed (Palinas & Soydan, 2012).
- A Mixed-methods approach was used as our research questions needed multiple methods (Eriksson oa 2014a).
- Analysis of documents, participatory observations, interviews and group discussions were included.
- The regional research ethical board had difficulties in accepting this innovative research proposal, but after complaints to the national ethical board it was accepted in all its phases.

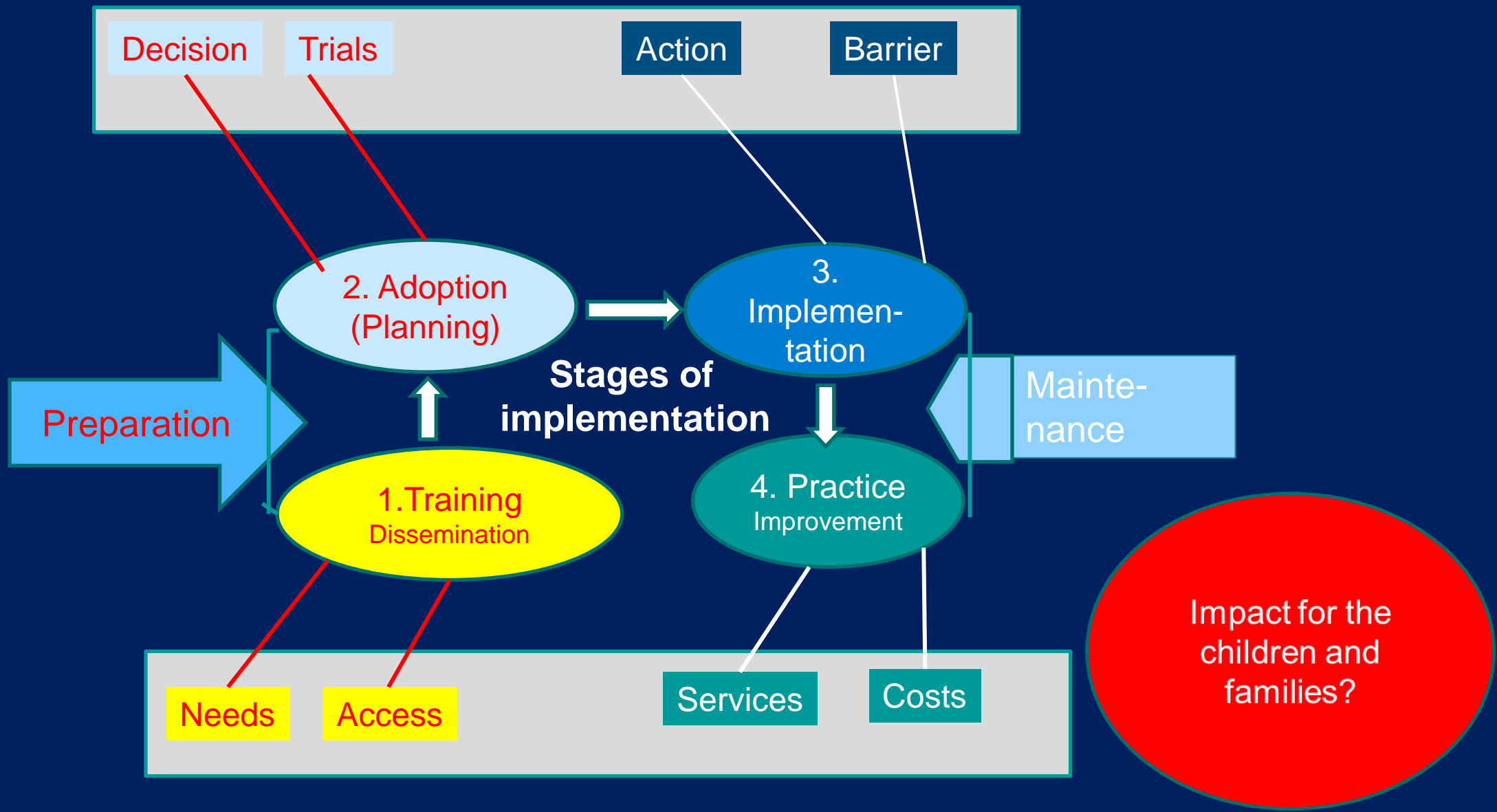


# Implementation structure

- A **national** implementation team was created by involving SALAR professionals working with strengthening the Swedish dependency treatment and working with the children initiatives.
- At **regional/county level** process leaders and development workers collaborated in joint assignments to support locally planned and implemented initiatives to support children and parents in their parenting tasks.
- **Local level** is empowered

# Implementation process

- **The national team** successfully developed a participatory developmental process including continuing education program and support structure.
- **At the county level a team** of professionals representing development effort for children and dependency issues cooperated in supporting the municipalities in their local plans, which included competence development, development of guidelines and cooperation for families in need.



# Voices of professionals



Kunskapsutveckling för ökad samverkan  
mellan barn- och vuxenvård inom  
socialtjänsten

Eriksson, C., Beckman, L., Aurin Edvardsson, I., Jensen, J., Larsson, A. & Meijer, K.

# Lesson learned

- A development process need leadership, clear mandates, time and support by monitoring and systematic knowledge.
- The aim is to promote long-term change and not projects. The social service is on-going, but the work with a client is a project that should be completed.

## Important aspects of the development process are

- the mission,
- structural conditions,
- personal circumstances,
- professional development,
- experience of collaboration,
- sustainable processes and
  - wanting but not able to.

# Voices of families

# FAMILY

Childhood and family situation

Informal support

The own roll

Own responsibility

Parenthood

Structure

Barrier to support

Collaboration

Professional competence

Abuse, dependency

Consequences for

the child

Come to insights

the parents

Value of being drugs free

When support facilitate change

Support from Social Services

Results

Tools for life

When support fails

Evaluation

Trust

Treatment

Methods, resources, actions

Treatment homes, housing

Design of the support to

partner

children

parenthood

Economic support



- **A parent on methods**

- "It's clear that it's not good to live in addiction, but the best thing is always to build up the parents. Let the parents get the knowledge, gain the power and get the opportunity to be a parent if they are having trouble with it so that they are helped to be a parent instead of getting help to get rid of their child“.

- **A parent on when support fails**

- "They lied until they found out that I had made a recording, then they became red in the face so that's why. It's good that you can record. Because the social workers are also human beings".

- **A parent on tools for life**

- "Yes, well, you are learning all the time. Yes, that backpack I got with me from there, or the toolbox, I've benefited from today, things that I brought with me "

# Main messages

National initiatives need an implementation structure that focus of real changes and sustainability.

Shortcomings in the working environment, staff turnover and workload are conditions that contribute to contribute to the failure of municipalities of not achieving or not participating at all in collaborative projects.

# Main messages

- Moreover, development processes need time to become sustainable and making a real difference for the children.
- Participatory practice-based research is a challenge and needs to be promoted.
- Increased collaboration can make a difference according to the voices of children, parents and professionals. Such initiatives are important also for social inclusion and social justice.



Thank you for your attention

[charli.eriksson@oru.se](mailto:charli.eriksson@oru.se)

