

# How and why draft a Policy Brief?<sup>1</sup>

Group Development Pakistan (GDP) is a Pakistani Civil Society Organization (CSO) registered under Society's Act of 1860. GDP believes in a democratic and humanistic society where the most important stakeholders -children- are acknowledged, respected, empowered, and protected from abuse and discrimination. GDP follows a holistic, inclusive, eco-friendly, culture-sensitive, gender/child-focused, systemic, and human rights-based approach. GDP envisages that Pakistan will become a country where each child is free from violence and discrimination and fully avails and exercises his/her fundamental rights to a life of dignity, safety, and self-fulfillment as described in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other relevant international and regional human rights instruments ratified by Pakistan.

To achieve its objectives and contribute to sustainable and positive legal and policy reform to promote and protect child rights, GDP uses policy briefs to present a specific policy problem and make a case for choosing a particular course of action to resolve or mitigate the problem. The policy brief aims to convince a target audience of the problem's urgency, lead this audience towards adopting a preferred policy alternative, and motivate action. GDP devises strategically focused, feasible, and evidence-based policy briefs to convince the target audience and increase their knowledge on a specific topic that affects children.

You will find several examples of our policy briefs by visiting GDP's website: <https://gdpakistan.org/> in the section titled resources/policy briefs.

## How Are Problems Identified?

The organization proposes solutions to well-defined problems that we can address at a policy level. Therefore, the issues and contributing factors are defined with as much specificity as possible to ensure that concrete and relevant policy actions are feasible and aligned with international human rights standards.



<sup>1</sup>[file:///C:/Users/SpectreGDP/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/0U0QU012/POLICY%20BRIEF%20outline%20and%20template%20\(002\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/SpectreGDP/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/0U0QU012/POLICY%20BRIEF%20outline%20and%20template%20(002).pdf)

## HOW IS THE ISSUE FRAMED?

A Policy Brief is framed to provide the target audience with a direct path to understand the problem and the proposed policy change while acknowledging the target audience's most pressing questions and answering them preemptively. The framework of the policy brief is articulated around the following questions:



### ■ **What is the problem?**

It is essential to present this question as clearly as possible and connect with the problem.

### ■ **What is the scope of the problem?**

It is beneficial to clarify the extent of the problem to your audience in concrete and tangible terms (international, regional, national, or local)?

### ■ **Who are the stakeholders?**

It is vital to identify the groups directly or indirectly affected by the problem or the solution (internal, external, primary, and secondary).

## STRUCTURE

GDP uses a specific format and follows guidelines to draft its policy brief:



- 1. Title:** the title of a policy brief must be compelling, relevant, and descriptive.
- 2. Executive Summary:** this section must convince the audience that it is worth further investigation, and this should not exceed more than two paragraphs and answer the following questions briefly.
  - What is the problem that the policy brief will address?
  - Why must the current approach be changed?
  - What are the recommendations for action?
- 3. Context & Scope of Problem:** this section must convince the target audience that an urgent problem requires attention and action. The context of the problem and its importance is the primary building block for subsequent brief sections. This section must present a clear and succinct problem definition, which includes:
  - a problem statement:
    - What is the problem?

- o Who does it affect?
- o What is the scale and scope of the problem?
- contributing factors:
  - o What are the root causes of the problem?
  - o Are there factors that exacerbate or improve the problem?
- policy implications:
  - o Why must we address this problem?
  - o Why must the problem be addressed now?

**4. Critique of the Current Approach:** policy analysts/drafters must detail the shortcomings of the current approach, if any, and illustrate the need for change and where that change needs to occur. To this effect, it is vital to address the following questions:

- What is the current approach to the problem?
- Why is the current approach failing? Who is it failing? How is it failing?
- What would happen if we did not change the current approach?

**5. Policy Alternatives:** analysts/drafters must propose policy alternatives to address the problem.

- Do the root causes of the problem present potential entry points for resolving or mitigating the issue?
- What are some of the generic policies that can be adopted to remedy the problem?
- Which criteria are most important to us in resolving the problem? What values are used to evaluate policy outcomes? What are we trying to achieve?

**6. Policy Recommendations:** detailed explanations of concrete and actionable steps that are recommended to address the policy issue. Ask yourself:

- What are policymakers and decision-makers asked to do, specifically?
- What goals would you like them to achieve?
- Are your policy recommendations specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant?
- What is the timeline for their implementation?
- This section may also include a closing paragraph to emphasize the importance of taking action and urging the audience to take your recommendations.
- What is the language

**7. Annexures:** If necessary and relevant, annexures should be included to provide further support, data, or evidence.

**8. Consulted or Recommended Sources:** to ensure transparency and credibility, reference/sources for data or additional information should be used in the policy brief.

## SYNERGIES

Some policy briefs may require multi-sectoral expertise. In this case, GDP identifies reliable experts and produces joint policy briefs, ensuring collaborative visibility.



## CHILD PARTICIPATION

Child participation is a concept enshrined in article 12 of the UNCRC and constitutes one of GDP's core organizational values. Whenever GDP drafts a policy brief, it takes into consideration ideas, opinions formulated by children. The children's views are collected via the following mechanisms:

- Online/offline Individual interviews
- Focus Group Discussions
- Child consultations
- Feedback gathered from messages sent by children to GDP
- Feedback compiled in reports following field activities with children
- Research featuring children's views



## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

GDP ensures that all its policy briefs always serve the child's best interest in alignment with international child safeguarding standards.