Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy

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Conceptualizing Drivers of Agriculture and Nutrition Policy Change through the Kaleidoscope Model

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Identifying Drivers of Policy Change

The current emphasis in the development community on demonstrating policy impact requires a better understanding of national policymaking processes to recognize opportunities for, and limits to, generating policy change. Consequently, as part of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy (FSP), an applied framework has been developed to analyze drivers of change in the food security arena, with a specific emphasis on agriculture and nutrition policies. Bridging insights from existing operational hypotheses within the international donor community and drawing on academic scholarship from public administration and political science, the framework aims to be flexible enough to encompass a broad range of agricultural and nutrition policy issues across a diverse set of countries. As such, it aspires to inform a variety of ongoing policy initiatives related to promoting food security in developing countries. For instance, it can help uncover why countries facing similar agricultural and nutrition challenges choose very different policy options for addressing those challenges. Likewise, it can assist with pinpointing whether bottlenecks to the implementation of improved policies is attributed solely to low capacity or may instead reflect insufficient political will.

Introducing the Kaleidoscope Model

The framework, presented in Figure 1 below, focuses on five key elements of the policy cycle: agenda setting, design, adoption, implementation, and evaluation and reform. The framework is labeled the Kaleidoscope Model because just as shifting a kaleidoscope refracts light on a new pattern, so does focusing on a particular element of the policy process reveal a different constellation of key variables. Like the pieces of a kaleidoscope, many of the underlying variables remain the same but as policy dynamics unfurl, some factors tend to have a disproportionately larger role in driving towards policy change than others at any particular point in time. The Model aims to identify the key variables that define the necessary and sufficient conditions for policy change to occur. These key variables are highlighted in the light grey, inner circle below, labelled "key determinants of policy change." They were identified through an extensive review of the secondary literature on episodes of policy change in developing countries across a broad range of policy domains related to food security, including agriculture, education, healthcare, nutrition, and social protection. These key variables are, in turn, influenced by a much larger set of factors, many, but not all, of which are listed in the darker grey circle and labelled as "illustrative contextual conditions."

Value-added of the Kaleidoscope Model

The advantages of the Kaleidoscope Model are at least fourfold. First, it incorporates issues of power and conflict much more so than existing operational hypotheses in the donor community that variously see policy change happening, for example, via training policy champions, improving institutional architecture, or promoting commitments among high-level policy makers. Secondly, compared with many traditional public policy theories, it recognizes the importance of external actors, including donors, and the simultaneous influence of interests, ideas, and institutions. Thirdly, it helps trace why a policy fails to be implemented by taking into account where gaps may have existed during other stages of the policy cycle. Finally, it is readily amenable to operationalization.

Testing the Model through Country Case Studies

The next step is to apply the Kaleidoscope Model to a set of case study countries in sub-Saharan Africa to understand variation in policy design, adoption, and

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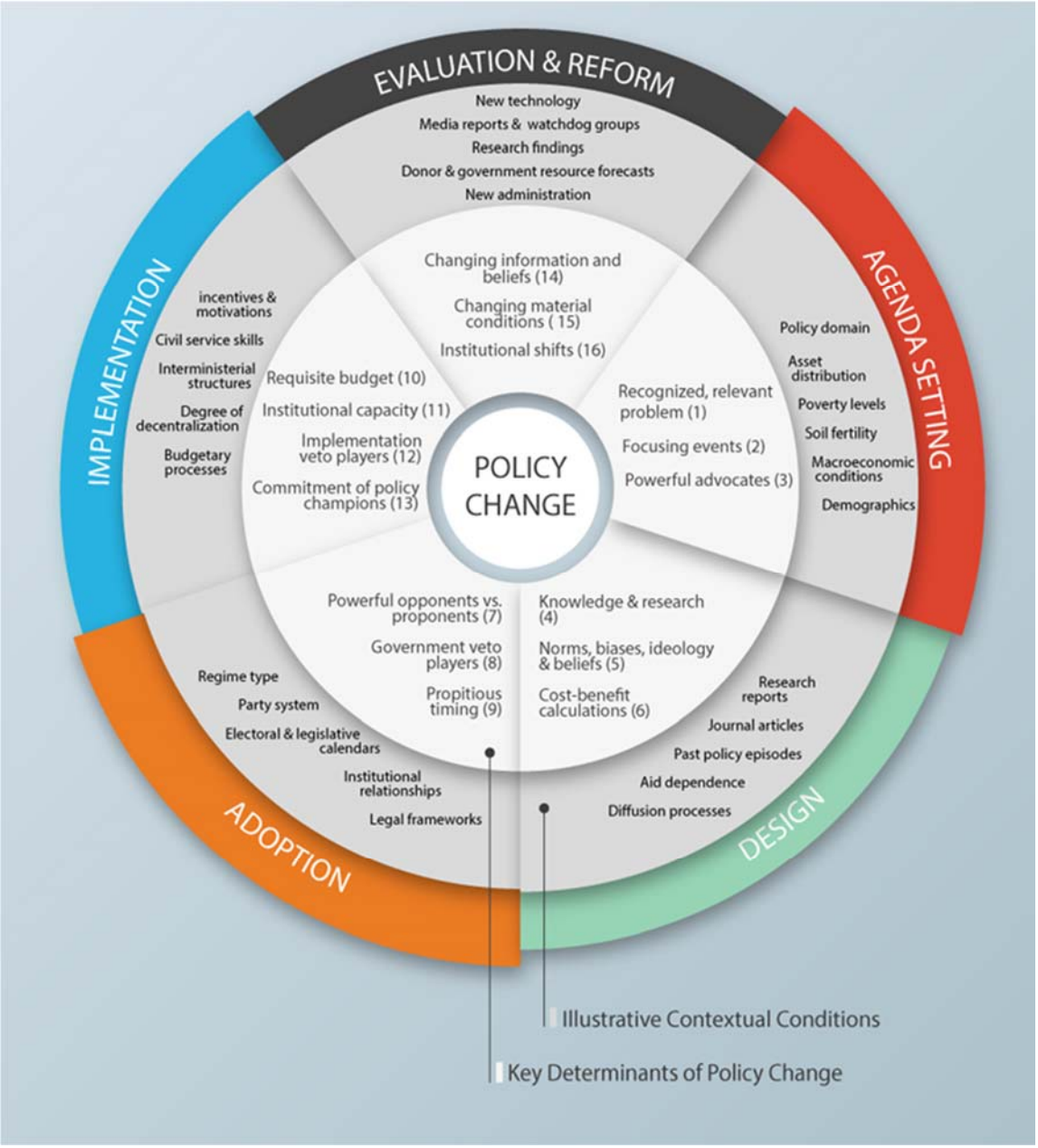
Figure 1. Kaleidoscope Model of Food Security Policy Change



implementation with respect to fertilizer subsidies and human micronutrient interventions, such as fortifying or supplementing food with key vitamins and nutrients. Although additional policy domains may also be incorporated in the near future, these two domains were initially selected due to their relevance to USAID's FTF policy priorities and because of the very different nature in the genesis and impact of these policies. For example, fertilizer subsidies can be a response to a crisis, such as a food price shock that reveals vulnerabilities to smallholder incomes, food security, and production. Human micronutrient deficiencies, however, take much longer to manifest and therefore, may require more long-term, sustained lobbying to emerge on the policy agenda. In addition, the impacts of micronutrient interventions may take more time and the beneficiaries may be more dispersed than fertilizer subsidies, which are often aimed at particular sub-groups of the population and are more visibly distributed. As a result, very different political economy dynamics occur within these two domains. Five African countries have been initially chosen to examine these two policies via in-depth fieldwork.

Case Studies on Fertilizer Subsidies

For fertilizer subsidy analysis, Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia have been initially selected mainly because these three countries have integrated different design modalities into their subsidy programs and are undergoing differential reform processes related to these inputs. Tanzania's program, the National Agricultural Input Voucher Scheme (NAIVS), represented a truly "smart subsidy" in that it (i) promoted the development of the private sector, (ii) targeted farmers who were not using fertilizer but who could find it profitable to do so; (iii) were part of a wider strategy that included complementary inputs and strengthening of markets; (iv) promoted competition and cost reductions by reducing barriers to entry; and (v) had a clear exit strategy. Ghana's Fertilizer Subsidy Program (FSP) represents the case of a mixed modality where the government is allowing the private sector to retail the subsidized fertilizer but is subsidizing private sector actors at multiple parts of the supply chain. In addition, the Ghana program does not limit quantities per household or target subsidized fertilizer specifically at farmers that would otherwise be unlikely to purchase fertilizer at commercial rates. Finally, Zambia's Farmer Input Support Program (FISP) has followed a government supply chain modality whereby the government runs a fertilizer supply chain that is parallel to that of the private sector. All three programs have experienced episodes of reform, including the shift from a voucher to a waybill system in Ghana, a gradual transition to e-vouchers in Zambia, and the ending of the program in Tanzania due to a lack of continued funding.

Case Studies on Micronutrient Interventions

For micronutrients, the cost and effectiveness of alternative interventions vary considerably by nutrient and by location because of wide differences in the composition of low-income diets and in the prevalence of processed foods in the overall consumption by rural and urban vulnerable groups. Therefore, initial case studies aim to compare nutrition policies across a range of different food system settings. In particular, we are looking for differences in food system sophistication, membership in the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative, and micronutrient policies. Consequently, a cluster of Southern African countries will be initially examined: Malawi, South Africa, and Zambia. Both Zambia and Malawi have participated in SUN while South Africa has abstained. But all three have pursued vitamin A supplementation of sugar and fortification interventions, with Malawi and South Africa engaging in iron supplementation as well. The process has been particularly contentious in Zambia but much less so in the other two contexts. These variations in agenda setting drivers and policy dynamics in countries with very different levels of food system sophistication will provide a useful application of the Model.

Research Methodology

In all five countries, FSP researchers will conduct semi-structured interviews with a broad range of affected stakeholders, beneficiaries, important domestic decision makers, and key international donors. This research will be facilitated by the strong linkages that the FSP consortium institutions, which are the International Food Policy Research Institute, Michigan State University, and the University of Pretoria, collectively have in these countries. In addition, it will be complemented by secondary research that focuses on null cases, which refers to countries where a policy emerged on the agenda but was never actively pursued.

Expected Recommendations for Policy Makers

The in-country fieldwork will not only test the robustness of the Model but also provide practical recommendations to USAID and others regarding how policy change emerges and why some policies persist while others fade away. For instance, the Model can help identify at what stage of the policy process development partners such as USAID can intervene to influence change. In some cases, this may be with respect to improving technical capacity and resources for implementation. In others, it will entail supporting policy champions to push their views onto the policy agenda. In still others, it will involve ensuring that high quality research intervenes at the policy design stage. Moreover, based on in-country fieldwork and consultation with stakeholders, a practical tool kit will be developed that can be used by development partners, practitioners, and researchers to support actual engagements in policy change. The toolkit will include policy chronologies to facilitate causal process tracing, policy maps to visualize relationships between actors and flows of information, authority, and finances, and stakeholder maps to identify where there is concurrence or dissension regarding policy preferences. Ultimately, the toolkit and Model will help emphasize what is necessary, and what is feasible, to promote better agriculture and nutrition policy choices and outcomes.

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