

Supporting and Shaping the Global Nutrition Agenda with Evidence:

A 3-decade journey of research and partnerships for impact

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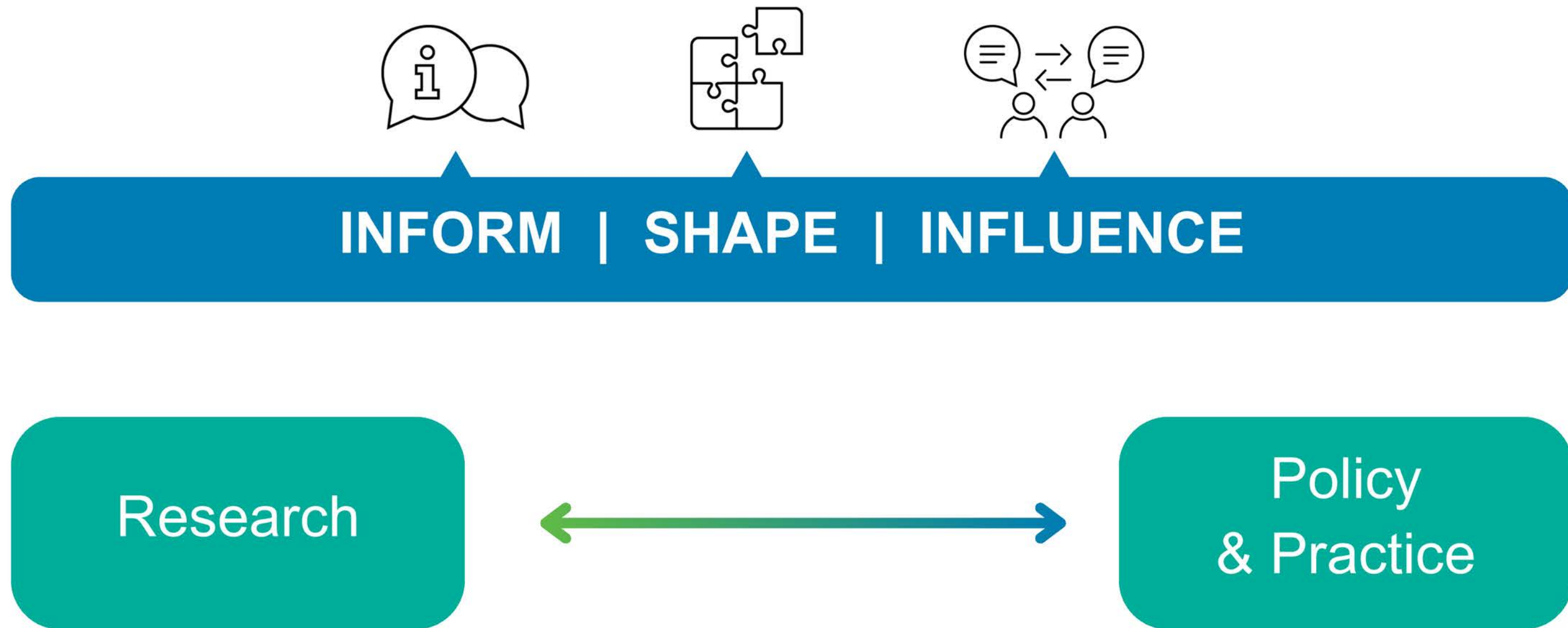
Introduction



Dr. Martin J. Forman



Role of Research in Shaping the Global Nutrition Agenda



Outline

1

**How can research
help shape
nutrition programs
and policy?**

2

**Did we have
impacts and what
challenges did we
face?**

3

**Where are we now
and what are the
new challenges?**

1

**How can research
help shape nutrition
programs and policy?**





CASE STUDY 1

Food Aid Targeting for Nutrition Impacts



Haiti Food Aid Targeting for Nutrition Impacts

- Early 2000: USAID was spending \$100M on development food aid
- Haiti was a big recipient of food assistance
- Haiti mission asked: **How should food aid be targeted to reduce malnutrition?**
 - Treat malnourished children (6-59 mo)
 - Prevent malnutrition (6-23 mo old)
- Partners: USAID Haiti/US, FANTA-AED, World Vision-Haiti, Cornell U.



Photo: Purnima Menon

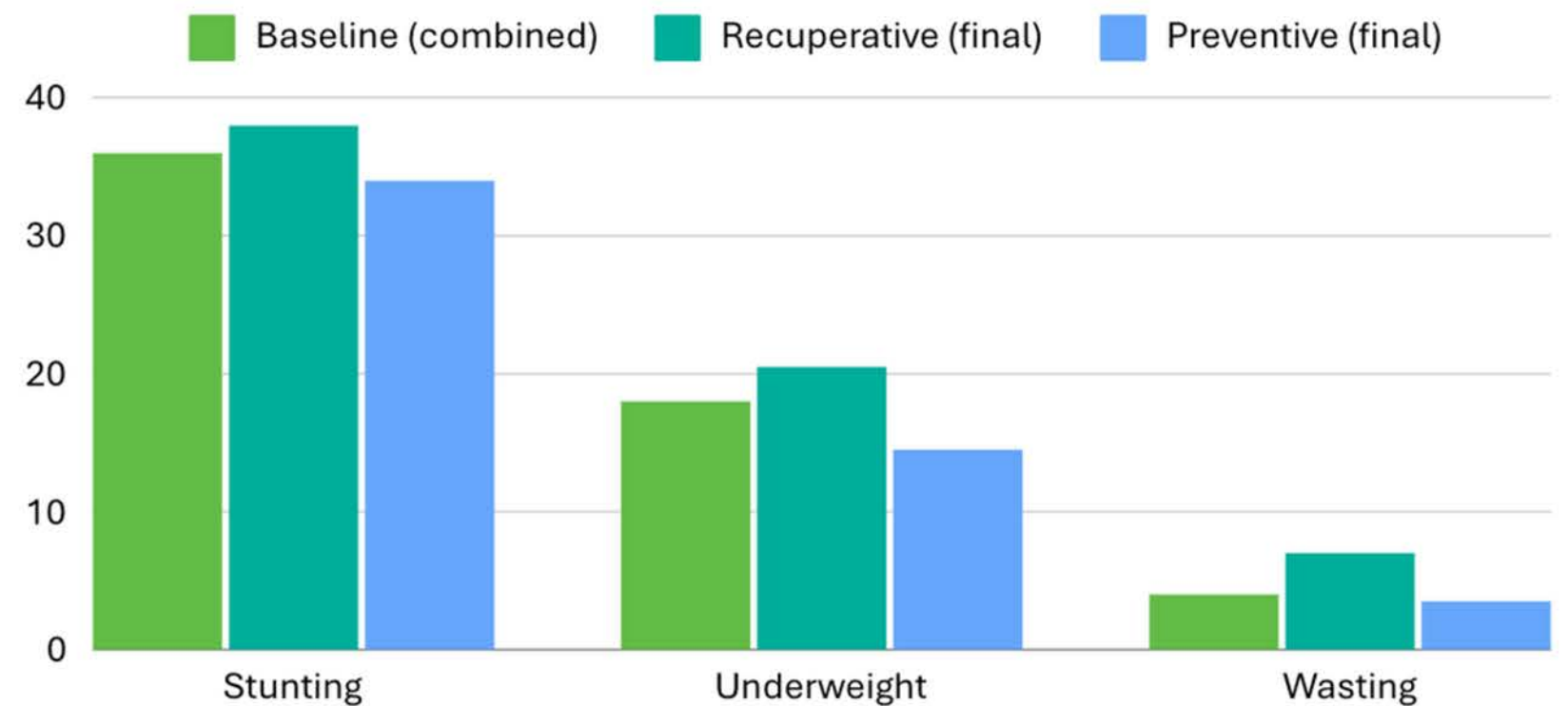
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Ref: Ruel et al. Lancet 2008

Prevention is more effective than treatment

Figure 1 | Prevalence of stunting, underweight, and wasting at baseline and final survey for two programs



Targeting 1st 1000 days works



CASE STUDY 2

Building Human Capital through Social Protection



Mexico's PROGRESA Program

Evaluation:

- Pioneer program aimed to break inter-generational transmission of poverty (1997-2019)
- Mexican government invited IFPRI to rigorously evaluate the program
- Range of positive impacts on poverty, health, education, nutrition, women's empowerment

Ref: Skoufias and McClafferty 2001

Cash



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Education



Preventive Health



Nutrition



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Why I chose this study:

- 1st large-scale evaluation of a SP program using RCT; 1st focused on human capital; high profile
- Created a culture of rigorous evaluation of complex SP programs - other countries followed suit
- “*Evaluation played a role in the sustainability and expansion of the program*” (Behrman 2010).
- Important for IFPRI

Ref: Santiago Levy, undersecretary Min Finance; Forman Lecture (2009)

Cash



Ref: Skoufias and McClafferty 2001

Education



Preventive Health



Nutrition





CASE STUDY 3

Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture



Nutrition-Sensitive Program Portfolios

NUTRITION-SENSITIVE POLICY



Stuart
Gillespie



Dan
Gilligan



Agnes Quisumbing



Marie
Ruel



Deanna
Olney



Health



Social Safety Nets



Education



Agriculture

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



Purnima
Menon



Jef
Leroy



Aulo
Gelli

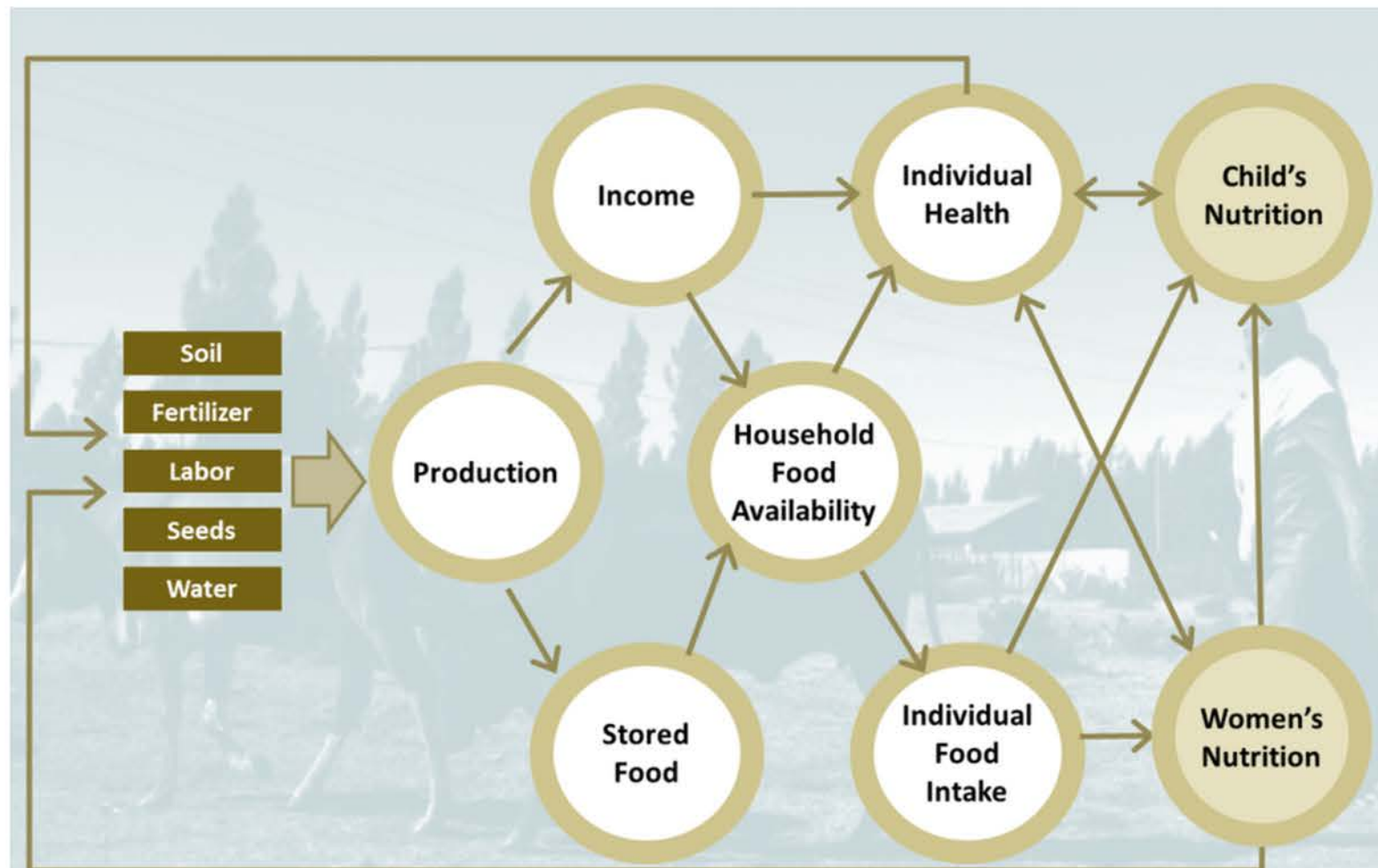
Agriculture and Nutrition



THE JOURNEY

1. Identify pathways of impacts for nutrition-sensitive agriculture

From agriculture to nutrition



Women: Key leverage point for improving nutrition through agriculture



2. Work with partners to develop guidance material



3. Engage in research and partnerships

- **Developed a diverse research portfolio** (contexts, designs, interventions, outcomes)
 - **Used rigorous impact evaluation methods:** impact, impact pathways, cost/effectiveness
 - **Tested, standardized, and shared methods/tools**
- **Engaged/nurtured partnerships** with NGOs, donors, gov., UN, academics
 - Ex: Helen Keller Intl., WFP, gov. (BD, IN), ET (CARE, World Vision), CRS, local NGOs, donors (e.g., BMGF, FCDO, USAID)
- **Communicated, synthesized work**
 - Communicated findings, experience, learning
 - Organized and engaged in conferences, workshops, trainings
 - Contributed to networks, alliances, movements (ANH Academy, Ag2Nut CoP, IMMANA)

2012-2022 Work was incorporated into CGIAR Ag for Nutr & Health (A4NH)
Broadened reach, partnerships, country focus, impacts
Led by John McDermott

4. Reflect on our experience and learn!!!

- **We changed our mind and revised some recommendations:**
 - Targeting
 - Outcomes to measure success
 - Using double-duty actions
- **Discussed remaining challenges**
 - Assess sustainability, scale up
 - Address complexity (multisectoral)
 - Explore how to incorporate in larger food systems processes



2

Did we have impacts and what challenges did we face?



IFPRI staff:
Dr. Mehrab Bakhtiar
M. Aminul Islam Khandaker
M. Shafiqul Karim

2021
Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury
Former Speaker of the House
Bangladesh National Government

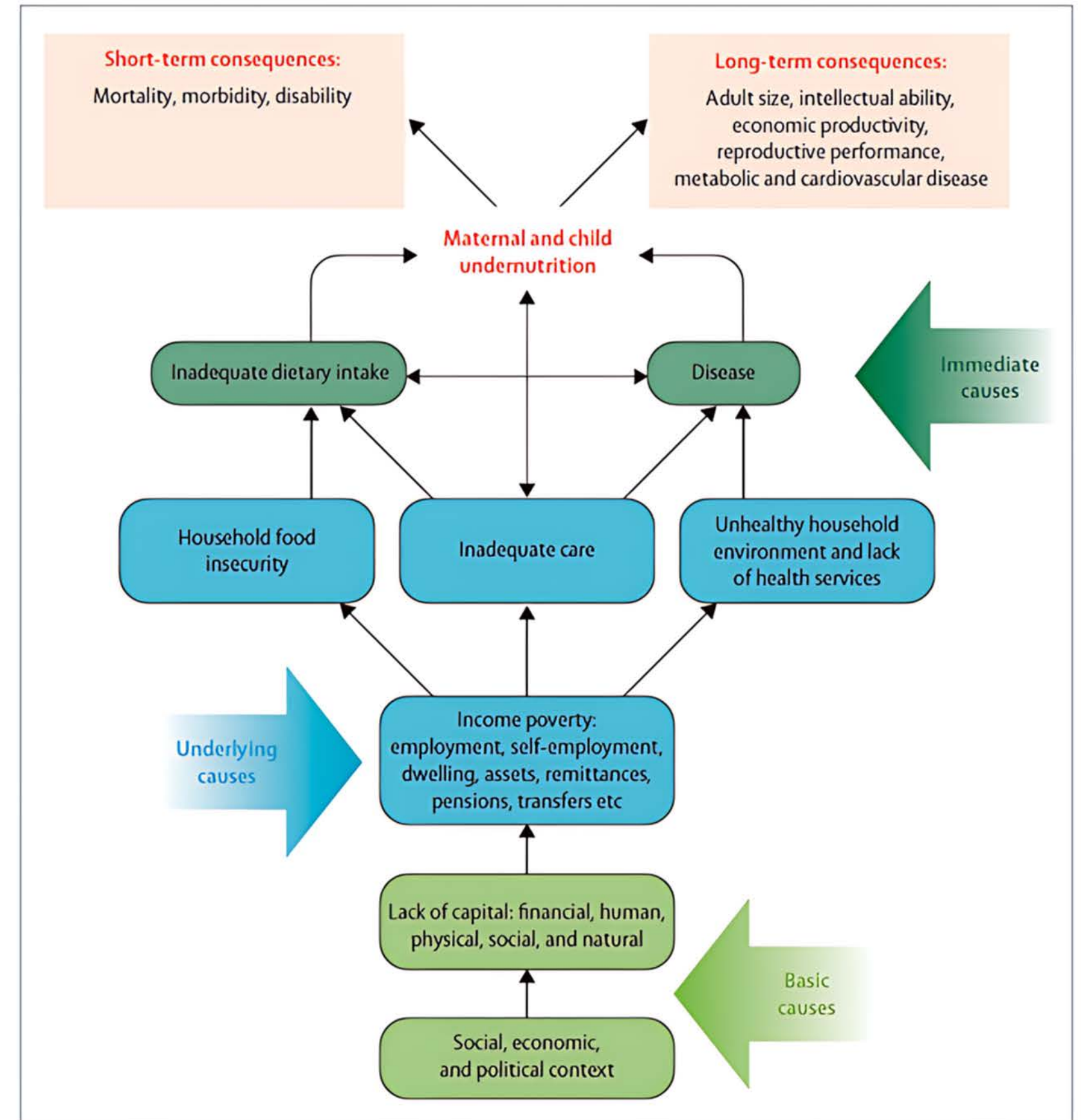
Did we have impacts?

On policy and practice

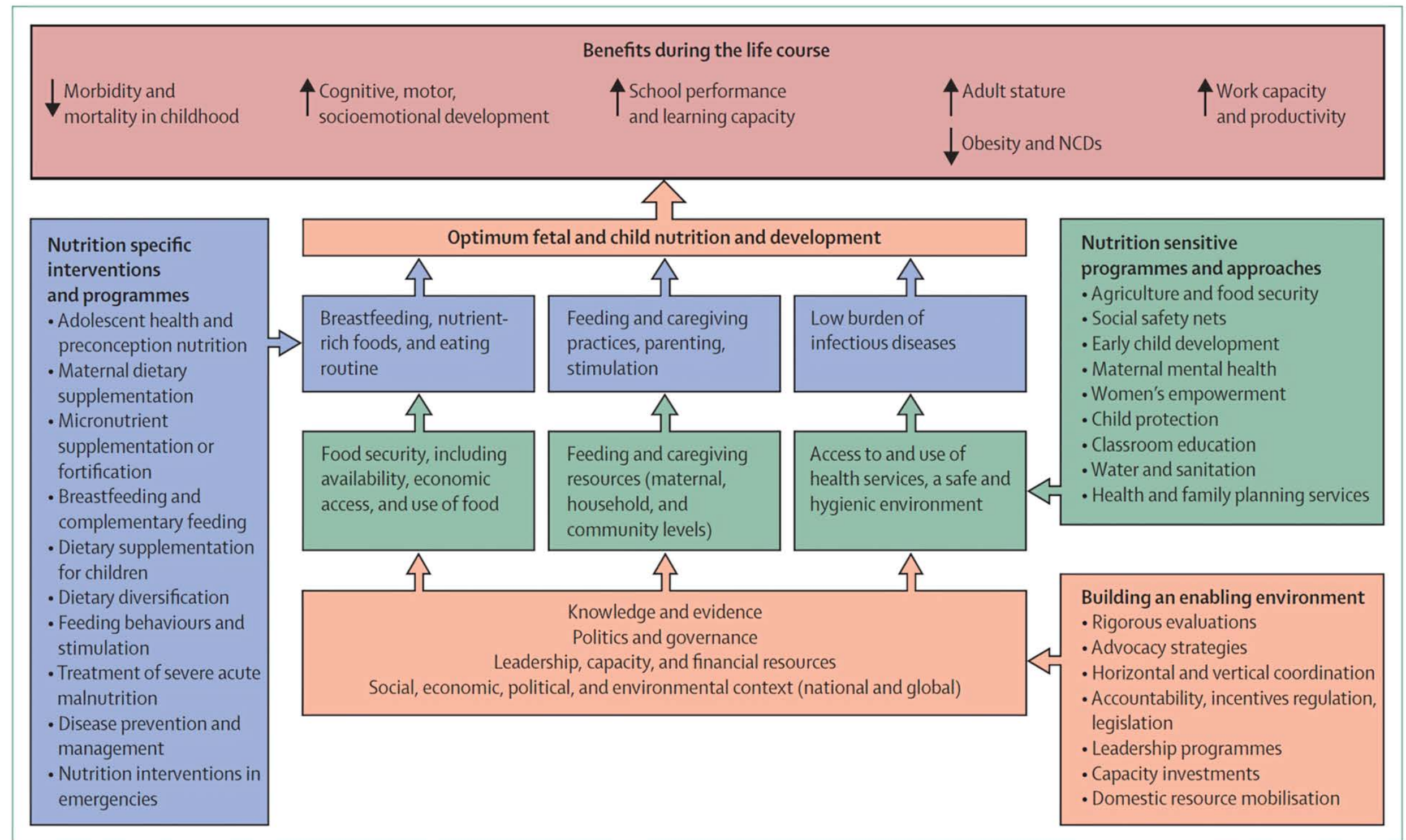
1. Impact on supporting and shaping the evolution of the global nutrition agenda

UNICEF Conceptual Framework - 2008

FOOD, HEALTH, CARE



Action-Oriented Framework - 2013



Did we have impacts?

On policy and practice

2. Impact on creating a culture of research to support program design and implementation and document impacts, impact pathways, and cost-effectiveness

3. Contributions to bringing together actors from multiple sectors and reaching a consensus on the need for multisectoral approaches

Did we have impacts?

On policy and practice

4. Contributions to incorporation nutrition-sensitive concepts and actions in policy making



2012: Inauguration of the Agriculture Policy Support Unit (APSU) in Bangladesh (USAID-funded Policy Research and Strategy Support Program (PRSP) 2010-2020)

Mrs. Matia Chowdhury (then Min. Ag.); Dr. Akhter Ahmed (IFPRI); Muhammad Razzaque (then Min. Food); Richard Green (then USAID mission director)

Did we have impacts?

On the poor

- **Poor program implementation and/or low uptake**
 - Reduces/prevents impacts
 - No story to tell
 - Donors and implementers lose interest and funding disappears
- **SBCC is particularly challenging**
 - Unskilled (often volunteer) workers
 - Poorly trained, supervised, incentivized
 - Low status in community
- **Poorly implemented programs are not scalable; and not sustainable**

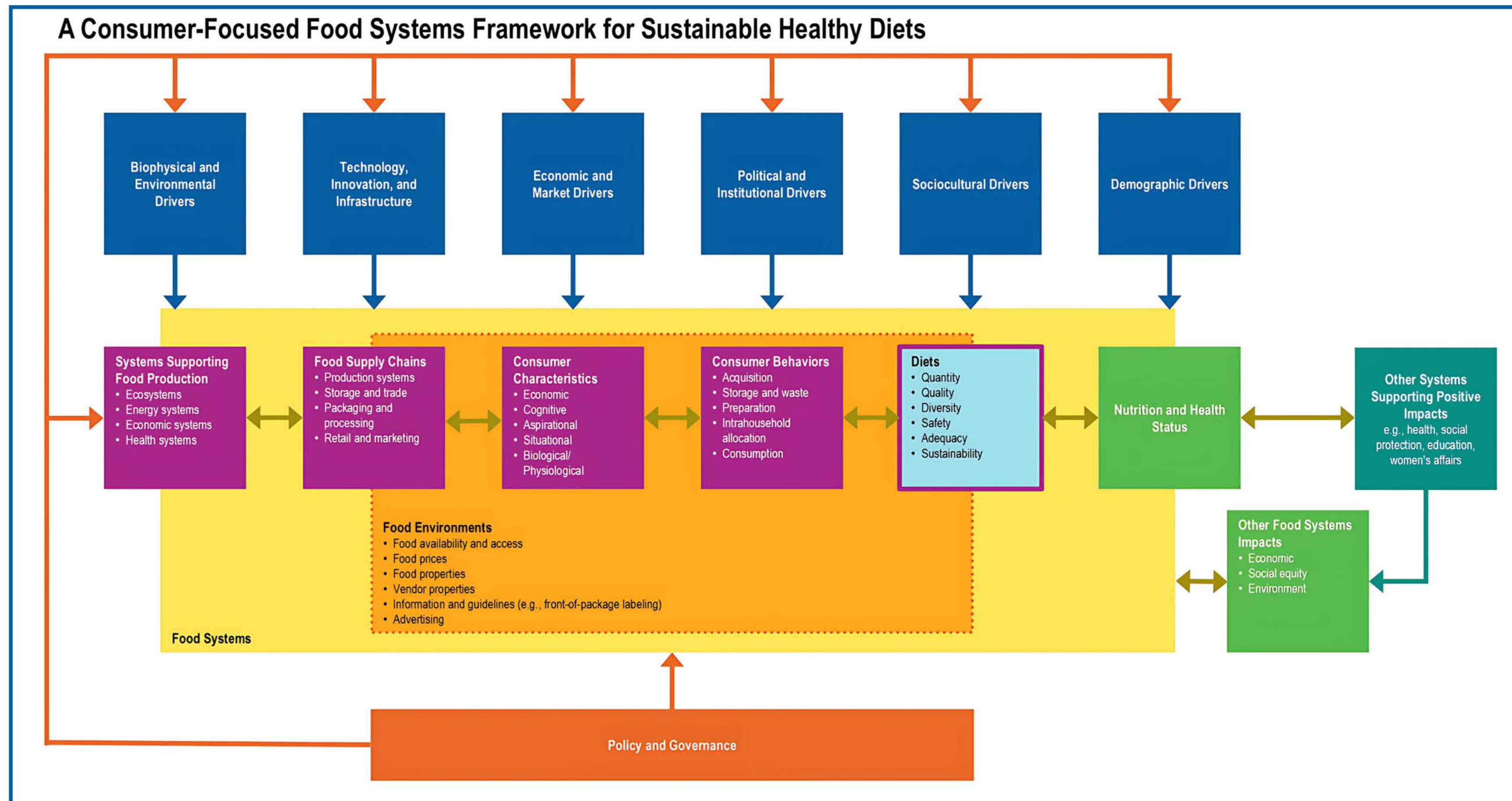


Photo: Meghan Parker

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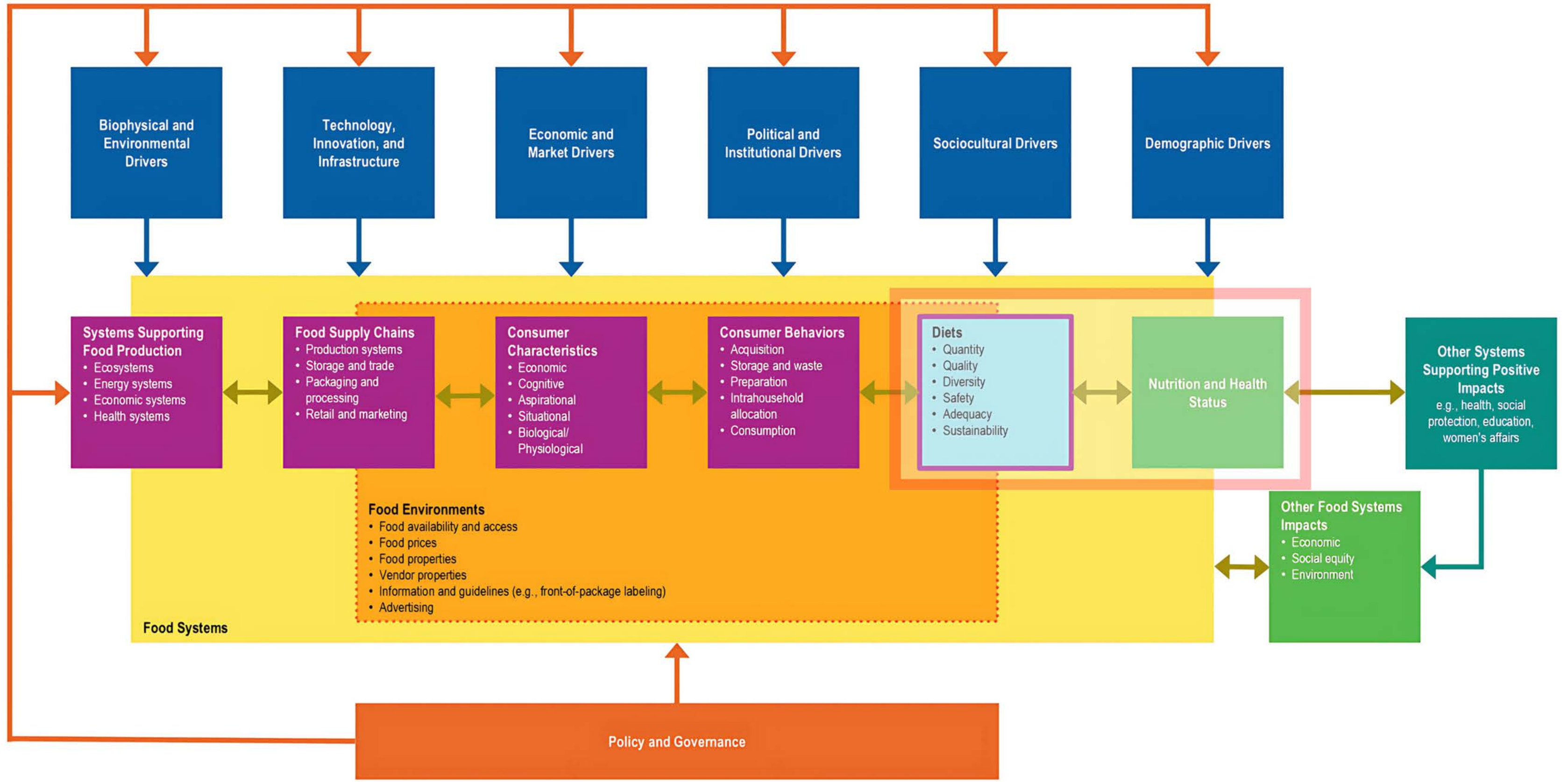
Where are we now
and what are some of
the new challenges?





Source: Adapted from the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security 2020

A Consumer-Focused Food Systems Framework for Sustainable Healthy Diets



Source: Adapted from the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security 2020

Where are we now?

- World is facing a series of extreme challenges
 - Multiple crises (climate, conflict, economic, political, health)
 - Multiple forms of malnutrition
 - Poor quality diets
 - Unaffordability of healthy diets (~3B)
 - Food industry releasing more and more cheap foods and that are unhealthy (UPF)
- We need to:
 - Focus on all forms of malnutrition and NCDs
 - Scale-up what works (e.g. BF (double duty action); MMS in pregnancy; LSFF)
 - Educate and support consumers
 - Reverse the tide on unhealthy FE and restrict marketing of unhealthy food



Photo:IFPRI CPA

My Concerns

- Lots of talks, meetings, reports, position papers, reviews, engagement, partnerships
- But where is the research?
 - Some very useful modeling (of policies, shocks, investments)- economy wide impacts
 - Research on improving measurement of diets and food environments, developing tool kits with simpler measurement tools, indicators
 - Research on the cost of healthy diets and estimating population who cannot afford a healthy diet
 - Lots of “talk” about innovation
 - Limited evidence so far/small scale evaluations
 - Challenges in using gold standard RCT evaluations: interconnectivity
- Where do programs fit? e.g. Double/Multiple Duty Actions (little progress on that)
- How can we train nutrition researchers and equip them with the skills they need to navigate food systems research



We need nutrition engineers

Alan Berg, 1993

- “We have been negligent in preparing people to work operationally in nutrition”
- “We lack appropriately trained and experienced people to design and manage large-scale nutrition policies, programs, and projects”
- “Operations research is needed along with impact evaluation”
- “We need to improve the capacity within developing countries to produce nutrition engineers”



**Sliding Toward Nutrition Malpractice
Time to Reconsider and Redeploy**

Annu. Rev. Nutr. 13:1-15, 1993

**Thanks to: everyone who worked
in my division since 1996!**



**Thanks to all the
children we weighed
and measured and
their caretakers**

