

Promoting policies for national ownership of nutrition: principles from maternal and newborn survival studies

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From Past Experiences to Current Challenges

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[Orienting question]

- What factors enhance the likelihood a public health issue will receive attention (authoritative decisions and public resources) in a national political system?
- Much speculation; little research
- Drawing on:
 - Public policy theory
 - Case studies of maternal and newborn survival

Studies in 9 low-income countries (2003-2011)

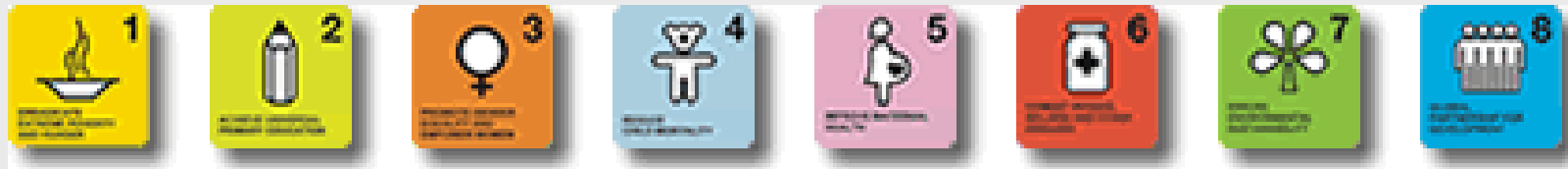
- Maternal survival (Guatemala; Honduras; India; Indonesia; Nigeria)
- Newborn survival (Bangladesh; Bolivia; Malawi; Nepal)
- Case studies
 - Informant interviews
 - Document analysis
 - Observation of implementation sites

Many factors, but five present systematically

- Global normative agreements
- Political entrepreneurs
- Policy community cohesion
- Credible indicators
- Clear policy alternatives

First factor: Global normative agreements

- What they are:
 - Agreements among actors, especially national governments and international donors, that an issue must be addressed
 - Norms are shared beliefs about appropriate behavior
- Why they matter:
 - Nation-states, like individuals, are socialized into preferences
 - Reputational effects
- Examples:
 - The MDGs
 - Pride in Nepal and Bangladesh in potentially reaching child survival MDG; recognize importance of neonatal survival



Second factor: Political entrepreneurs

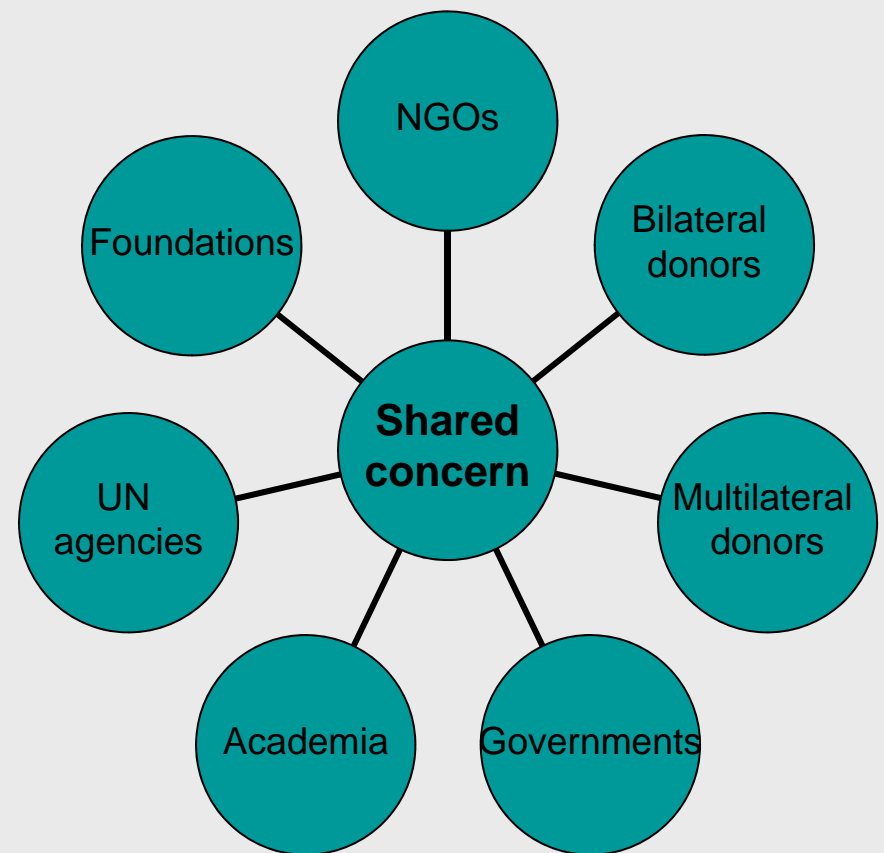
- Who they are:
 - Individuals acknowledged as **strong champions** for the cause
- Why they matter:
 - Defining issue; inspiring action; bringing together policy communities
- Examples:
 - Assistant Minister for Women's Roles in Indonesia (for maternal)
 - Save the Children doctor in Bangladesh (for newborns)



Third factor:

Policy community cohesion

- What it is:
 - Coalescence among network of concerned organizations
 - Policy communities can include multiple organizational types
- Why it matters:
 - Enhances policy community authority and political power
- Examples
 - Cohesive Honduran maternal mortality policy community (1990s)
 - Fragmented Malawian newborn survival policy community (2000s)



Fifth factor: Clear policy alternatives

- What these are:
 - Means of addressing the problem backed by evidence and clearly explained
- Why they matter:
 - Policy-makers more likely to act on issues they think they can do something about
- Example:
 - Safe motherhood intervention fights prior to 2007
 - Growing consensus surrounding three pillars



Relevance to micronutrient agenda?

- Global normative agreements
- Political entrepreneurs
- Policy community cohesion
- Credible indicators
- Clear policy alternatives