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## Stakeholder engagement strategies for policy and programmatic uptake: Lessons from the Drivers of Food Choice Competitive Grants Program

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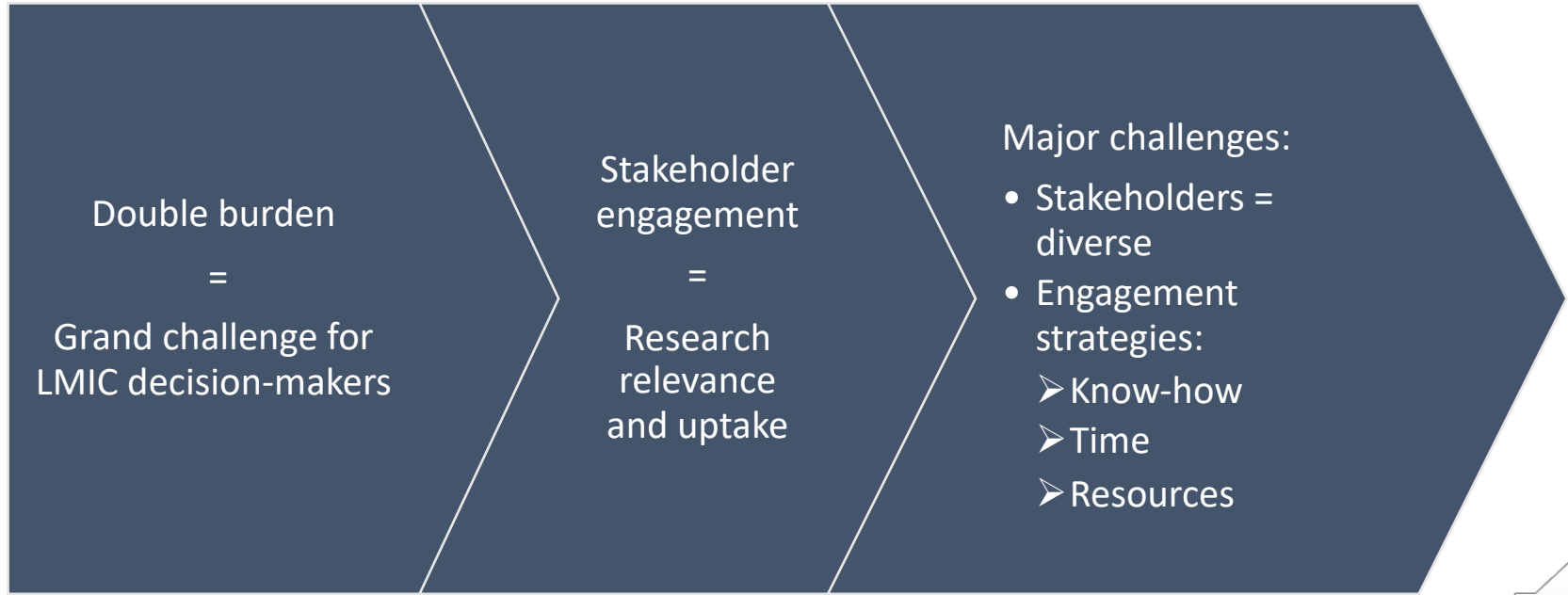


Drivers of Food Choice  
Competitive Grants Program

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# Background



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- Drivers of Food Choice Competitive Grants Program
- DFC Competitive Grants Program
  - 15 projects in 10 LMICs
  - All designed and implemented stakeholder engagement strategies to promote uptake tailored to context – no standard template

*The purpose of the Drivers of Food Choice program is to facilitate, synthesize and disseminate research to provide a deep understanding of the drivers of food choice among the poor in developing countries. DFC projects also aim to strengthen country-level leadership in nutrition and foster a global community of food choice researchers.*



# Objective

Derive lessons learned about designing and implementing stakeholder engagement strategies



Advance knowledge about best practices



# Methods

- DFC Competitive Grants Program
  - 15 projects in 10 LMICs
  - All designed and implemented stakeholder engagement strategies to promote uptake tailored to context
- Document review
  - Project proposals
  - Project reports
- Semi-structured interviews with project leads (n=15)
  - Topic: experiences designing and implementing strategies, what works, recommendations for improvement
- Thematic analysis using a priori and inductive codes → thematic survey
  - Dissemination and implementation science



# Results: Overview

	Uni-directional engagement strategies	Bi-directional engagement strategies
<b>Defining characteristics</b>	Researcher-driven and informational, no input from the target stakeholder	Carried out collaboratively with stakeholders
<b>Goals</b>	Increase buy-in and generate demand for results to promote the use of evidence for decision-making.	Produce knowledge collaboratively to enhance the immediate applicability of research.
<b>Examples</b>	Emails, newsletters, meetings, press releases, technical briefs, newspaper articles, public engagement efforts	Stakeholder mapping exercises, collaborative inception workshops, results validation exercises, collaborative development of recommendations



# Uni-directional strategies

- Benefits
- Limitations

Uni-directional engagement strategies	
<b>Defining characteristics</b>	Researcher-driven and informational, no input from the target stakeholder
<b>Goals</b>	Increase buy-in and generate demand for results to promote the use of evidence for decision-making.
<b>Examples</b>	Emails, newsletters, meetings, press releases, technical briefs, newspaper articles, public engagement efforts



# Bi-directional strategies

- Benefits
- Notes on implementation
- Limitations

“...[the inception meeting] didn't shape the research from the beginning enormously - we already had a clear idea about our aims and methods, but [...] it made us realize which of those particular elements were especially important and how we needed to focus to make it all very accessible in terms of what we find.”

Bi-directional engagement strategies	
<b>Defining characteristics</b>	Carried out collaboratively with stakeholders
<b>Goals</b>	Produce knowledge collaboratively to enhance the immediate applicability of research.
<b>Examples</b>	Stakeholder mapping exercises, collaborative inception workshops, results validation exercises, collaborative development of recommendations





# Conclusions and key takeaways

1. Tailor strategies based on goals for uptake and impact pathways specific to context:

- mix of strategies
- timing of engagement
- frequency of contact

2. Use both uni-and bi-directional strategies.

3. Engage throughout, not only at dissemination.

4. Participation facilitates uptake.

***“We had had experiences which were bad in the past. Researchers go ahead, design their studies, implement them, come up with findings, then bring the findings to [us] to implement. Some of the questions we would pose to the researchers - where were [we] when these ideas were hatched out?”***



# Recommendations



RESEARCHERS SHOULD SYSTEMATICALLY  
DOCUMENT THEIR ENGAGEMENT  
STRATEGIES AND EXPERIENCES



FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD  
ALLOCATE RESOURCES FOR THESE  
ACTIVITIES TO ADVANCE BEST PRACTICES



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