

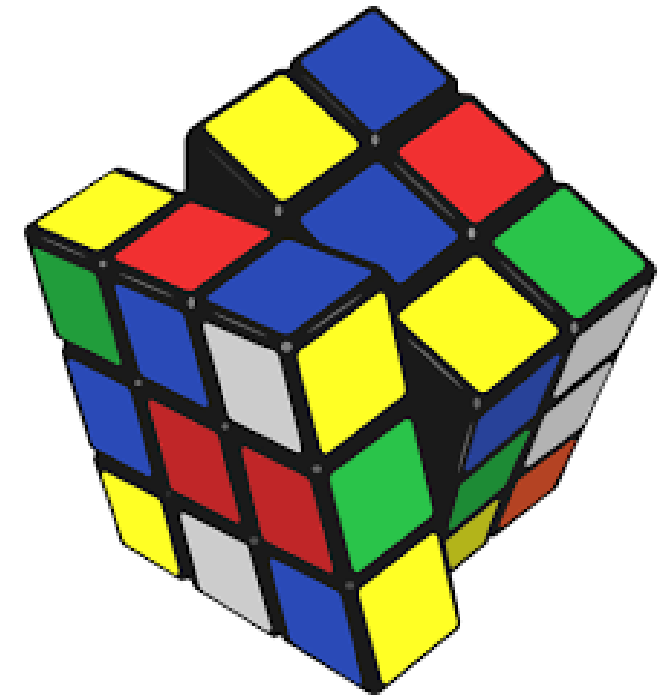
Effective incentives for Food system transformation

Farewell address prof. dr. Ruerd Ruben

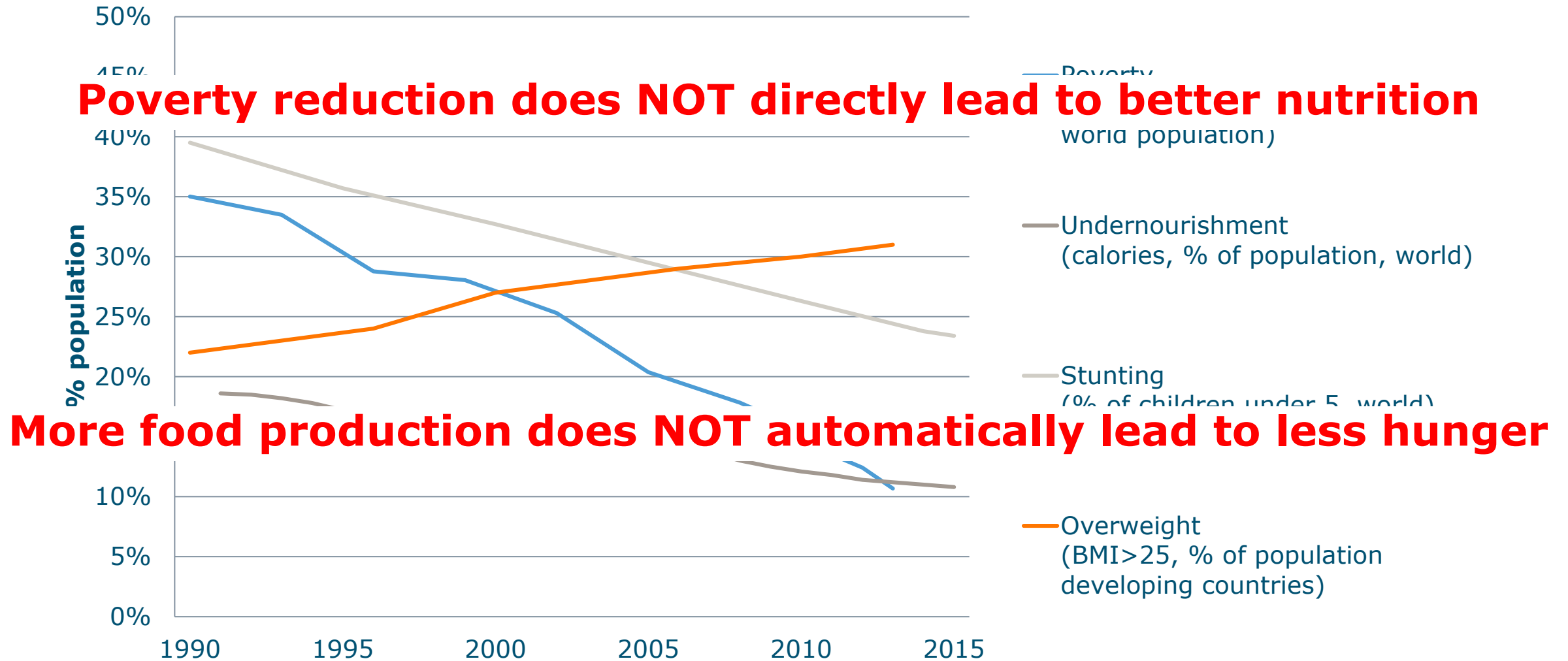


WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

Solving puzzles & playing games to understand systems



Poverty & Food security – global trends



Growing concerns about food security

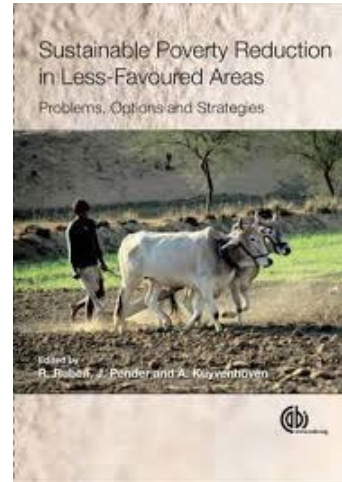
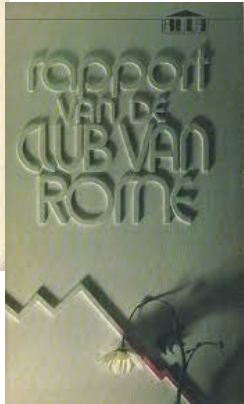
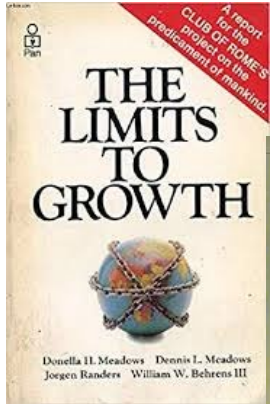
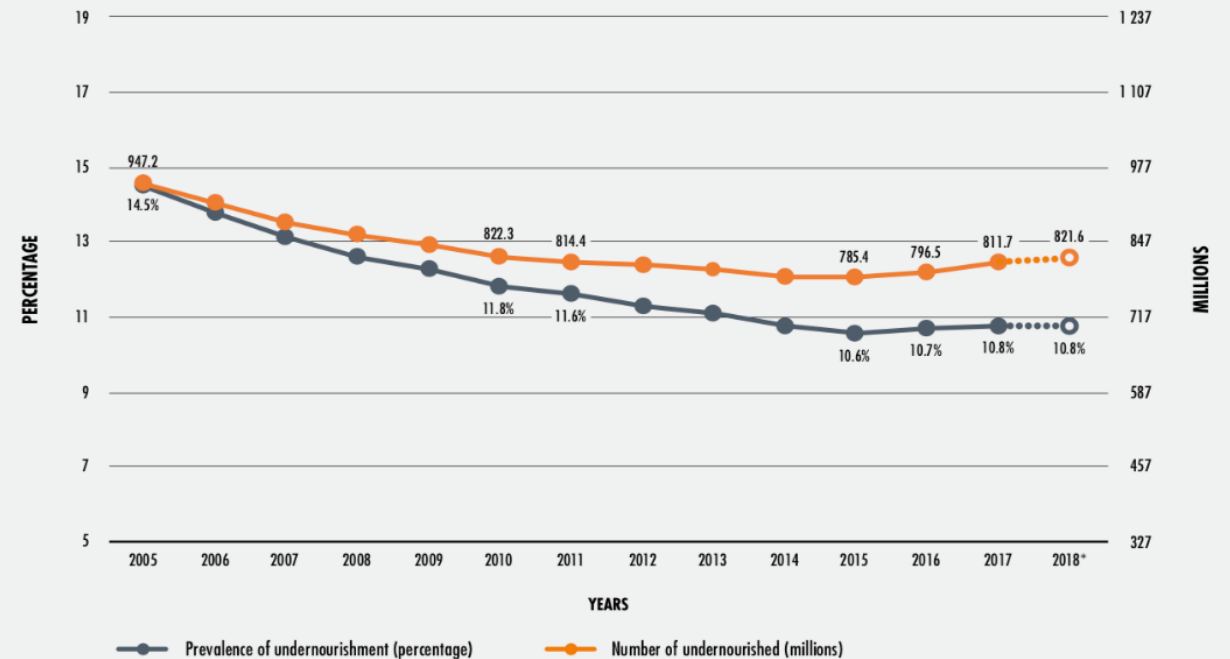


FIGURE 1
THE NUMBER OF UNDERNOURISHED PEOPLE IN THE WORLD HAS BEEN ON THE RISE SINCE 2015, AND IS BACK TO LEVELS SEEN IN 2010–2011

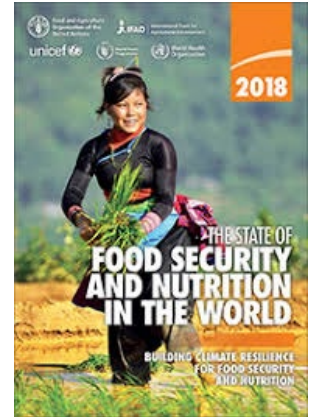


NOTES: * Values for 2018 are projections as illustrated by dotted lines and empty circles. The entire series was carefully revised to reflect new information made available since the publication of the last edition of the report; it replaces all series published previously. See Box 2.
SOURCE: FAO.

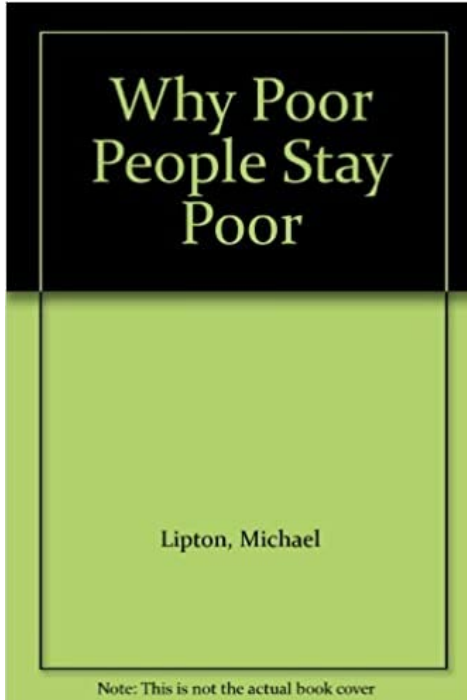
Urgent action at the interface of policy & research



“Jane, for the last time, if you can’t resist interjecting reality into your research, this may not be the right think tank for you!”



Why do people stay hungry?



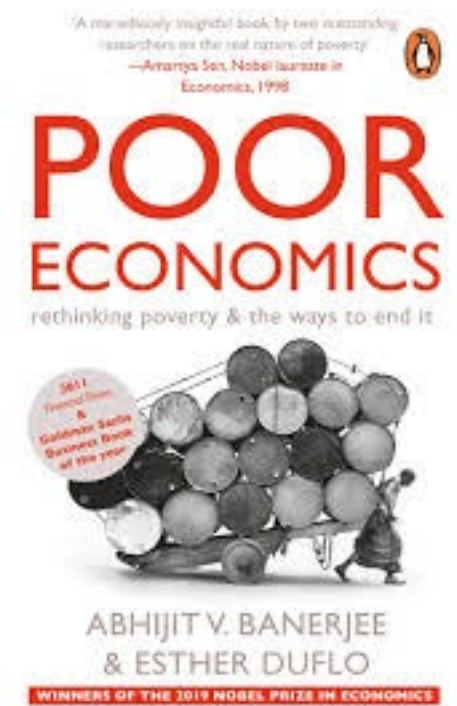
Urban Bias



Policy failures



Collective Action



Human behaviour

Perverse incentives & adverse outcomes (1)



Higher farm-gate prices but lower food supply

- ❑ missing markets (de Janvry)
- ❑ leisure preferences (Chayanov)



More food production but worse nutrition

- ❑ gender roles (Boserup)
- ❑ negative price effects (Griffin)

Perverse incentives & adverse outcomes (2)



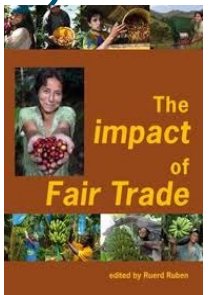
Off-farm working improves farm-household dietary diversity

- ☐ more efficient farm production
- ☐ alternative income streams
- ☐ enabling food purchase

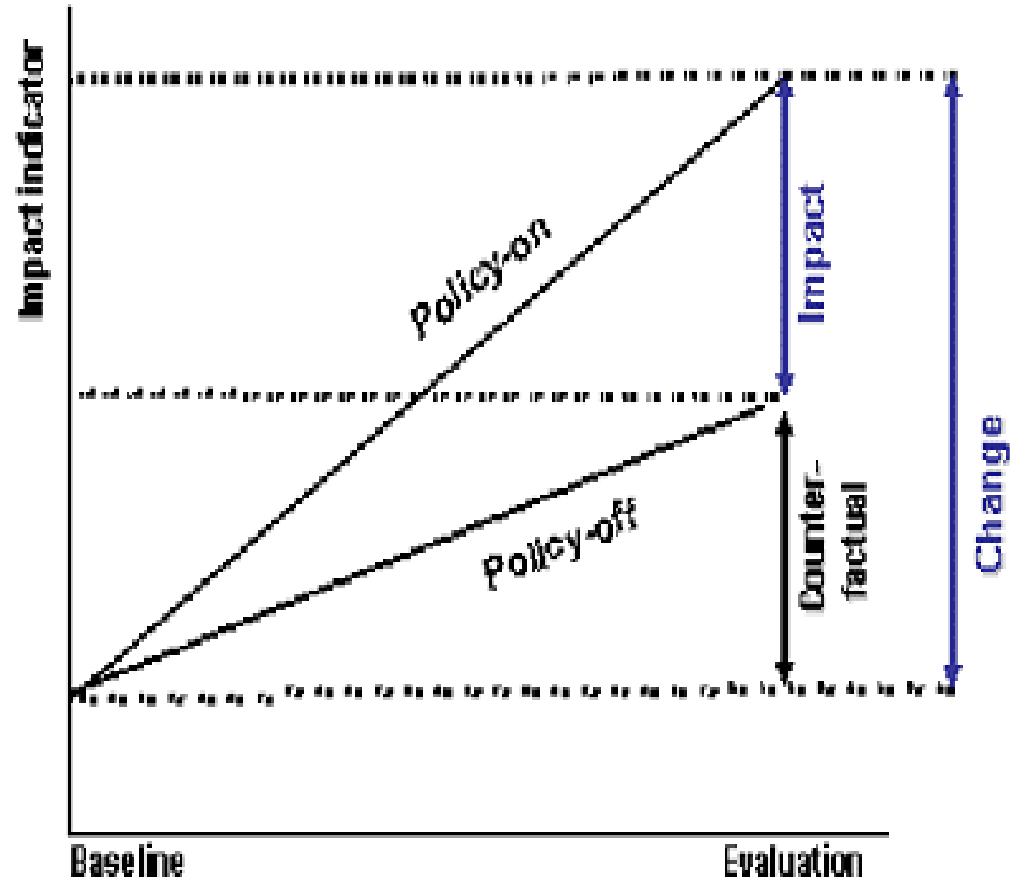


Commodity certification may reduce farmer incomes

- ☐ crop specialization (Rijsbergen et al)
- ☐ easy copying (Ruben & Fort)
- ☐ over-certification (Amsaya)



Principles for Impact Assessment



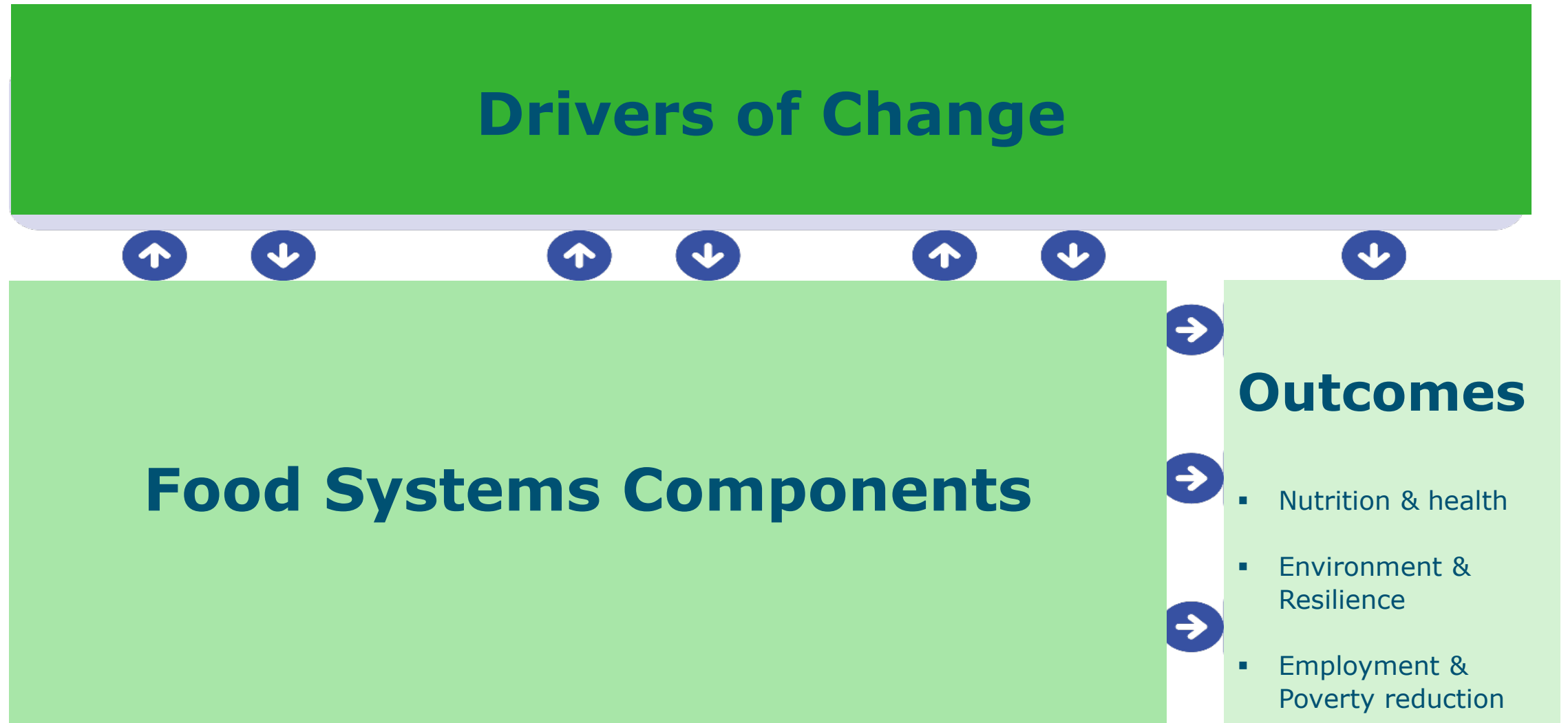
Comparing:

- Before & after the intervention
- With & without intervention
- Matching & Diff-in-diff

Impact failures may occur due to:

- Focus on partial responses
- Overlooking institutional failures
- Overestimating behavioural response

Trade-offs in food systems



Searching system solutions



Analytical biases (1)



Multiple resources

- ☐ competition for scarce resources
- ☐ substitution & complementarities
- ☐ non-adoption due to labour constraints



Multiple goals

- ☐ economic growth & equity
- ☐ wealth & asset distribution
- ☐ differences between male and female preferences

Analytical biases (2)



Multiple incentives

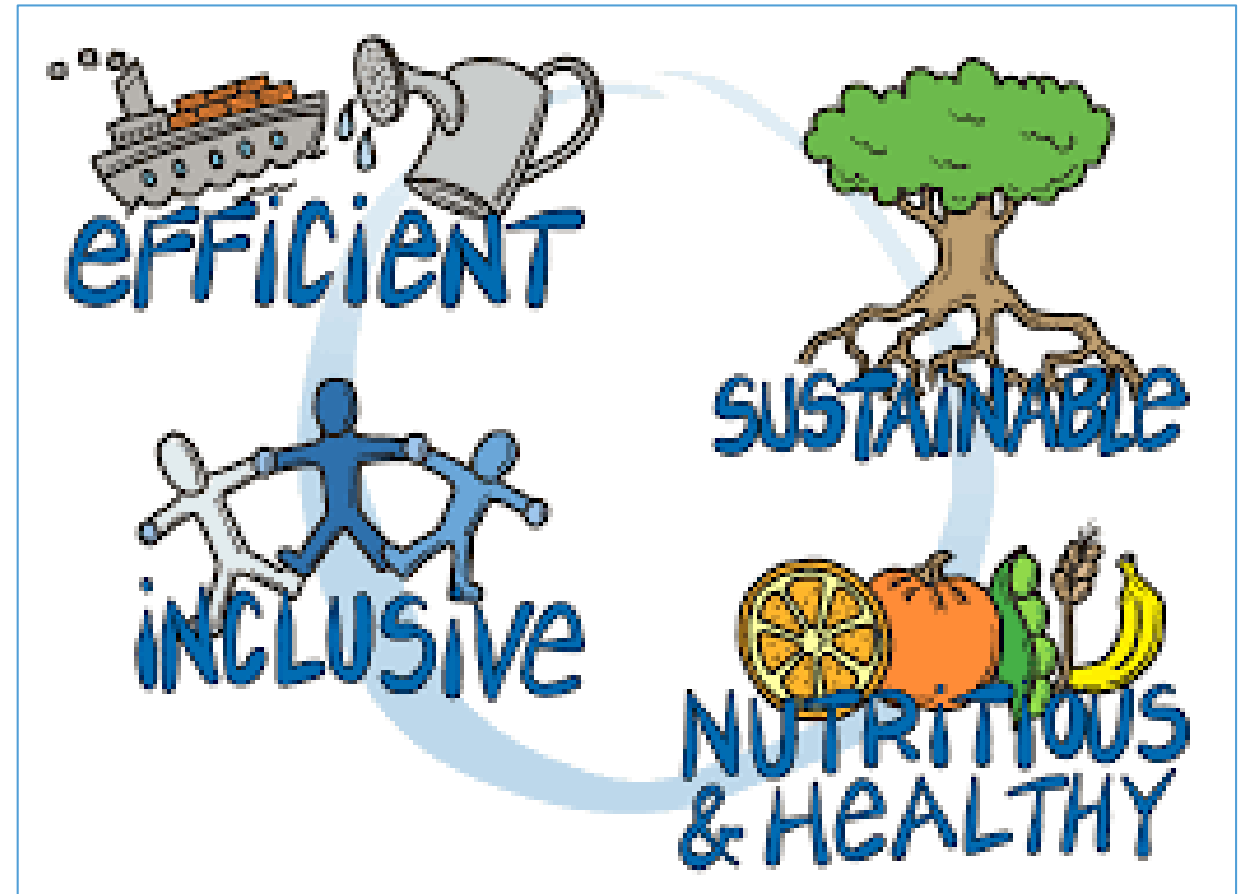
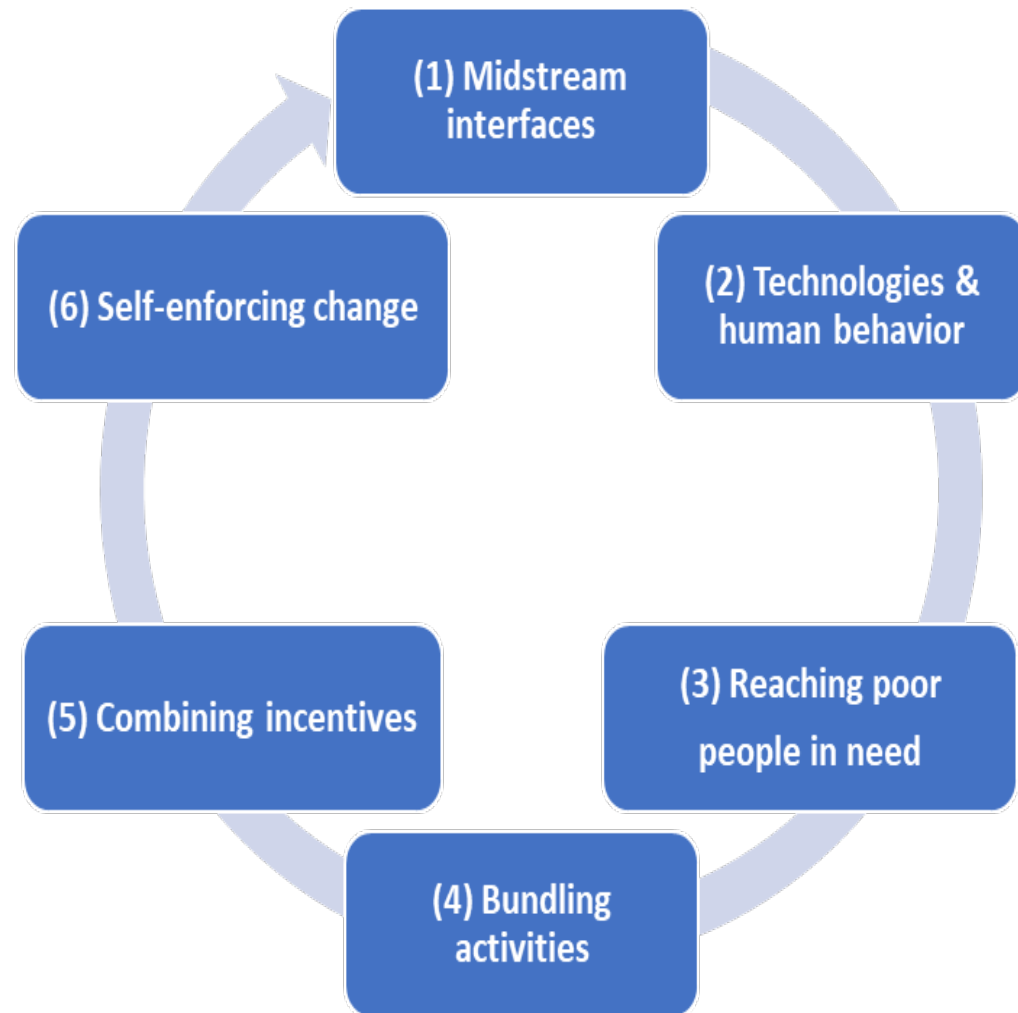
- ☐ complementary inputs
- ☐ need for policy mix (land & credit)
- ☐ credit supply & risk reduction



Multiple drivers

- ☐ technology change & behaviour
- ☐ triple burden of malnutrition
- ☐ need for policy coherence

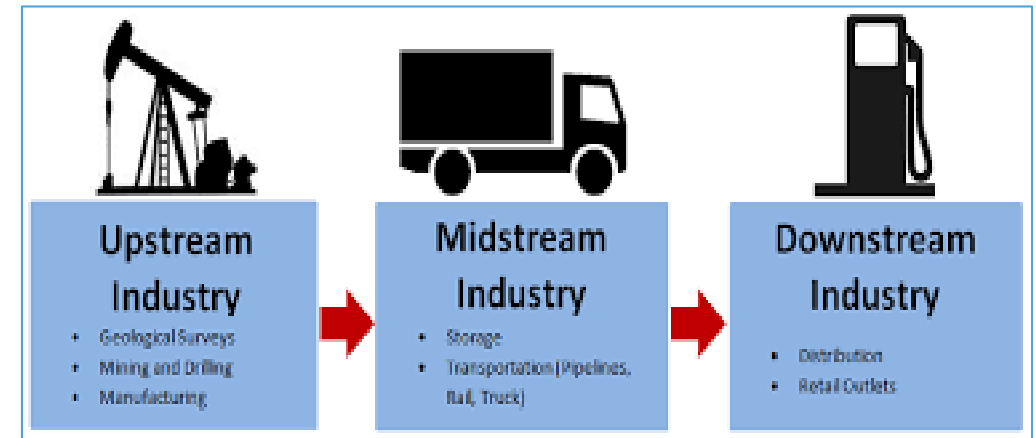
Envisioning future food systems



(A) Identifying opportunities (entry points)

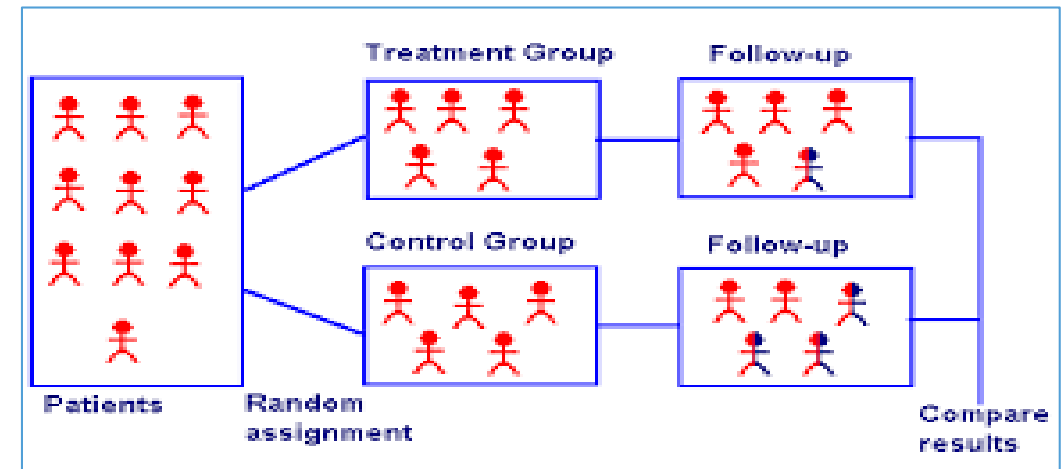
1. Focus on hidden middle

- Linking producers & consumers
- Midstream activities



2. Behavioural change

- Trust & risk attitudes
- RCT experiments



(B) Designing transformative activities

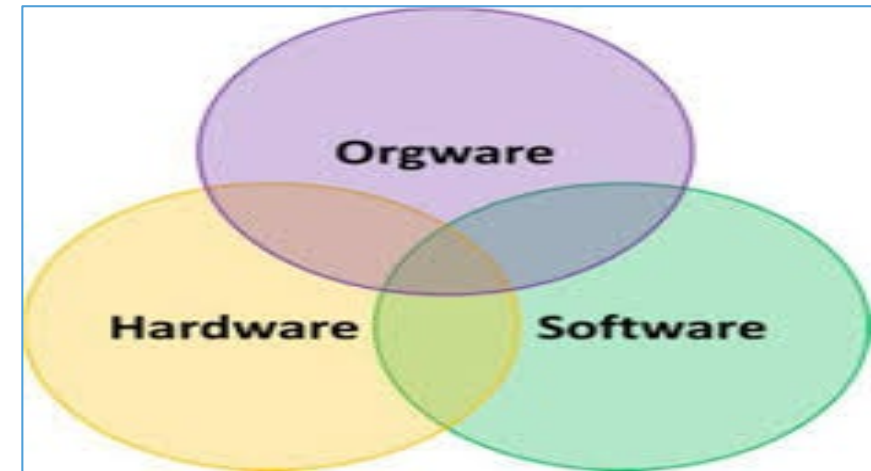
3. Tailoring interventions to livelihoods

- Heterogenous responses
- Poverty \neq malnutrition
- Targeting people or places?



4. Bundling activities

- Public, private & civic actors
- Hardware, orgware & software
- Sequence of intervention matters



(C) Putting transformative change in practice

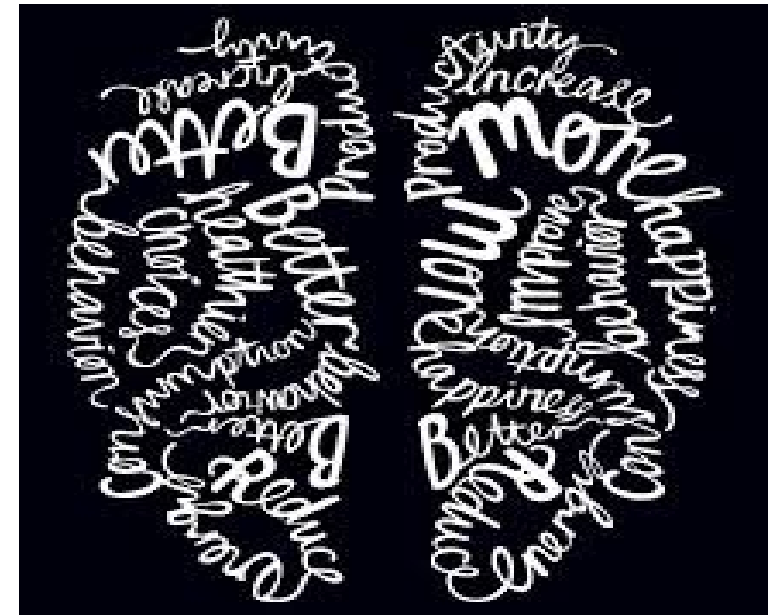
5. Anchoring in the policy process

- Showing synergy opportunities
- Identifying SMART incentives
- Focus on Alternative pay-offs



6. Self-enforcement & feedbacks

- Creating spill-overs
- Bargaining solutions
- Supporting win-win options



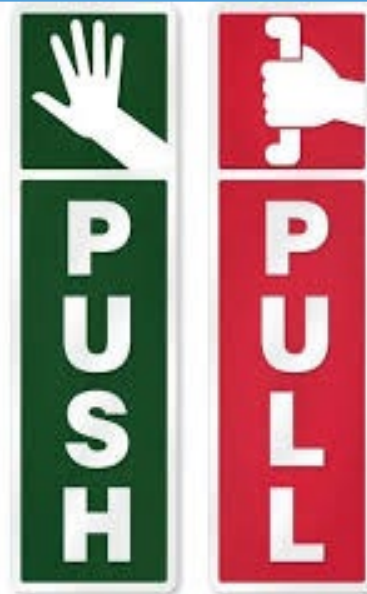
Incentives for food system transformation

Enabling food environment

- **Ownership rights**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Information**
- **Transparency**
- **Participation**
- **Bargaining**

Increasing responsiveness

Resources
Knowledge
Trust
Risk attitudes
Diet choice
Cooperation



Future challenges & outlook



Food &
Nutrition



Governance
& Conflicts



Climate &
resilience



Mobility &
Stability

A food system transformation research agenda

- Mixed strategies: combining market & institutional incentives
- Contracts: combining horizontal cooperation & vertical integration
- Scaling: from individual solutions to collective response
- Dual purpose interventions: food & climate ; poverty & nutrition
- Multi-level approach: individual – family – community/city - country

A few words of thanks

