

What is a Policy Brief?

- A short document that presents the findings and recommendations of a research project
- A medium for exploring an issue and identifying lessons learned from research
- Advice for how to solve a social issue



Working with the most marginalised to catalyse sustainable change after 2015

"We are trying our best to bring change but we can't do it, and tackle wider social problems, alone. So we want you to work with us." (Mathare, Nairobi, Spatial Collective 2013)

The vision of development expressed by people living in greatest poverty and marginalisation should be at the heart of the post-2015 debate. Current participatory research in 29 countries reveals two sets of principles for how development should happen. The first calls for a recognition of the rights of those experiencing extreme poverty and marginalisation to enable all people to flourish. The second centres on collective action for social and policy change. Change must occur through more democratic relationships in families and communities, and mechanisms which allow marginalised citizens to hold governments accountable.

As the call to 'leave no one behind' gains traction, policy responses must go beyond current MDG targets that have incentivised a focus on the easiest to reach. They need to contend with the complexity of poverty and deliver development that concentrates on the hardest to reach, integrating the insights of those most affected by poverty if sustainable change is to be achieved.

Rights and recognition can change social norms

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People experiencing poverty and marginalisation talk about rights as a crucial means to achieving equality and dignity in their societies. The rights they prioritise reflect the deficits that they feel most keenly in their own lives. Formal recognition of rights in law or as constitutional requirements are a critical milestone, but do not automatically translate into concrete outcomes. The reality for the poorest, experienced through the behaviour and attitudes of government officials, often fails to reflect this. Collective action is needed for them to become a force for positive change. State support through legislation that challenges discrimination is essential, but must work in conjunction with cultural change and value shifts to reduce stigma and exclusion. The post-2015 development framework should ensure the inherent dignity of all by fostering global norms that eradicate discriminatory practices and empower people at the local level.

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What is in Policy Brief?

- **A concise summary of a particular issue**
- **Background information so that the reader understands the issue**
- **Policy options and alternatives to address the issue at hand**
- **Recommendations for which policies are best**



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Above: Parent Odour is a community mapper for Spatial Collective. She is a resident of Mathare, Nairobi, Kenya, and her interests are to improve both her knowledge and also the living standards of her community. *Praxis Collective 2013*

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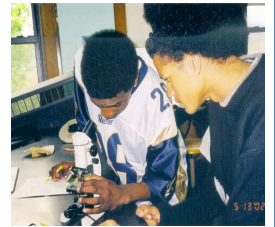
Example: Policy Brief

- **A concise summary of a particular issue**
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- **Recommendations for which policies are best**



Strengthening Afterschool for Older Youth through Policy and Practice: A Policy Brief

June 2007



Why Afterschool?

Afterschool and other out-of-school time (OST) programs for older youth (such as before-school, summer, and weekend programs) provide them with opportunities to enrich their lives with diverse, valuable activities that go beyond their classroom experiences. Here are the four most significant reasons why afterschool programs matter.

- ♦ Afterschool and OST programs provide **extended learning opportunities** to help youth meet and exceed academic standards and develop important social, personal, civic, and employability skills. They can help “level the playing field” for youth who are academically or developmentally behind while providing an opportunity for at-level students to broaden their skill sets.
- ♦ Afterschool programs have the opportunity to offer a **comprehensive, holistic approach** to serving youth by providing specialized services such as parent workshops and English-language classes; physical, dental, and eye exams; mental health counseling; and teen parent programs.
- ♦ Afterschool programs provide youth with a **safe and positive environment** during the afterschool hours, when juvenile crime and “risky behavior” rates are at their peaks, and when many parents are at work.
- ♦ Afterschool programs both **supplement the school day** by offering much-needed activities like college and career counseling and character education, and also provide activities that are decreasingly available in schools, such as art, physical education, music, and civics. They also offer a unique opportunity to provide less traditional learning experiences such as hands-on learning, group projects, and service-learning.

Policies & Practices That Can Strengthen Afterschool

Currently, the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) **21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)** program is the primary federal program funding afterschool programs. But various other federal funding sources support afterschool and OST programs as well. These include ED programs such as Supplemental Educational Services under the No Child Left Behind Act, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, Comprehensive School Reform, and GEAR UP, as well as non-ED programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Workforce Investment Act, and AmeriCorps, among others. These federal programs can serve as vehicles for improving many afterschool policies.

There are **five key areas** in which strategic policy efforts could greatly enhance afterschool programming:

- ♦ **Developing the capacity of the afterschool system**
- ♦ **Defining, building, measuring, and improving program quality**
- ♦ **Ensuring access for disadvantaged youth, especially older youth**
- ♦ **Determining desired outcomes and collecting data for program evaluation**
- ♦ **Connecting afterschool to the broader education reform discussion**

Explore!

Policy Brief

- Take 2 minutes to explore the policy brief titled *“Rising Food Prices: A Global Crisis”*
- Find ALL the following:
 - **Summary**
 - Background Info**
 - Policy Options**
 - Recommendations**
- Be ready to discuss where these pieces are

Rising food prices: A global crisis

Action needed now to avert poverty and hunger

Soaring food prices pose problems for three groups. First, the poor whose ability to buy food is undermined. Second, governments of low-income countries facing higher import bills, soaring costs for safety net programmes and political unrest. Third, aid agencies juggling increased demands for food, cash and technical advice. High food prices threaten the gains made since the 1960s and highlight the long-term need for investment in, and better management of, the global food supply.

This Paper examines the causes of rising food prices, expected trends, the likely impact, and possible policy responses.



The rising price of corn poses a threat to the world's poor.

What is happening and why?

Before recent price hikes, the real price of food had been falling since the 1950s. The 'green revolution' that began in the mid-1960s saw developing world farmers planting improved varieties of cereals, prompting extraordinary increases in yields, falling food prices and reductions in poverty.

But food prices have risen since the early 2000s, and particularly since 2006. The price of a tonne of wheat climbed from \$105 in January 2000, to \$167 in January 2006, to \$481 in March 2008 (IMF Primary Commodity Prices, 2008). Forecasts for the next ten years predict continuing high prices because of structural changes in supply and demand.

On the supply side, rising oil prices mean increased costs for fertilisers, machine operations and transport. As Figure 1 shows, oil prices have risen faster than food prices and the price of nitrogen fertilisers has risen with them. In the US the price index for nitrogen fertiliser stood at 118 in 2000 but reached 204 by 2006 (US Department of Agriculture, 2008). USDA expects

unit costs of production of cereals to rise by up to 15% between 2006-7 and 2016-17.

Short-term supply shocks include poor harvests in some exporting countries – particularly Australia where drought has hit wheat production – at a time of dwindling world cereal stocks. Speculation in commodity prices by investors may have contributed to price rises, and the falling value of the dollar has not helped. Some exporting countries have imposed taxes, minimum prices, quotas and outright bans on exports of rice and wheat.

On the demand side, growing incomes in countries such as China and India mean rising demand for meat. OECD and FAO forecast that in non-OECD countries consumption of meat and dairy produce will rise by up to 2.4% a year between 2007 and 2016 (von Braun, 2007). Much of the additional meat, and some of the dairy, will be produced by feeding grains to livestock.

Once oil prices top \$60 a barrel, biofuels become more competitive and grains may be diverted to biofuel production (Schmidhuber, 2006). With oil now costing over \$100 per barrel – and the US and EU trying to reach biofuel

Key points

- Food prices have been rising since 2000, spiked in early 2008, and may remain high for another ten years
- Prompt action is needed to protect the poorest and support low-income countries faced by surging import bills
- In the medium term, economic and agricultural growth can offset the damage, but this will require more determined efforts to boost food production

Overseas Development Institute

ODI is the UK's leading independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues.

ODI Briefing Papers present information, analysis and key policy recommendations on important development and humanitarian topics.

This and other ODI Briefing Papers are available from www.odi.org.uk

Things to consider...

- What is the issue (the policy debate)?
- Who is the audience?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What are their interests?
- So, what are you recommending (what policy action)?
- What is your outreach plan for the brief?

WHAT should a Policy Brief be like?

- **Short and to the point!**
Think quality, not quantity
- **Based on firm evidence!**
Look at various examples, organizations, experiences, etc.
- **Focus on meanings, not methods**
Be as clear about *what* should be done as *why*
- **Relate to the big picture**



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HOW should a Policy Brief be like?

- Your objective is to persuade:
Use Ethos, Pathos, & Logos
- Make it look attractive
Using images and diagrams is crucial
- Make it interesting
People are more likely to read things they care about



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Brainstorm!

Policy Brief

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- Who is the audience?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What are their interests?
- So, what are you recommending (what policy action)?
- What is your outreach plan for the brief?

Explore!

Policy Brief

- In a moment, get with your product design group
- Take 10 minutes to find a policy brief that pertains to your issue

Example: search “domestic violence policy brief”

- Look for:

- **Summary**
- **Background Info**
- **Policy Options**
- **Recommendations**



Briefing Paper
April 2008

37

Rising food prices: A global crisis

Action needed now to avert poverty and hunger

Soaring food prices pose problems for three groups. First, the poor whose ability to buy food is undermined. Second, governments of low-income countries facing higher import bills, soaring costs for safety net programmes and political unrest. Third, aid agencies juggling increased demands for food, cash and technical advice. High food prices threaten the gains made since the 1960s and highlight the long-term need for investment in, and better management of, the global food supply.



The rising price of corn poses a threat to the world's poor.

Key points

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unit costs of production of cereals to rise by up to 15% between 2006-7 and 2016-17.

Short-term supply shocks include poor harvests in some exporting countries – particularly Australia where drought has hit wheat production – at a time of dwindling world cereal stocks. Speculation in commodity prices by investors may have contributed to price rises, and the falling value of the dollar has not helped. Some exporting countries have imposed taxes, minimum prices, quotas and outright bans on exports of rice and wheat.

On the demand side, growing incomes in countries such as China and India mean rising demand for meat. OECD and FAO forecast that in non-OECD countries consumption of meat and dairy produce will rise by up to 2.4% a year between 2007 and 2016 (von Braun, 2007). Much of the additional meat, and some of the dairy, will be produced by feeding grains to livestock.

Once oil prices top \$60 a barrel, biofuels become more competitive and grains may be diverted to biofuel production (Schmidhuber, 2006). With oil now costing over \$100 per barrel – and the US and EU trying to reach biofuel

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Existing Policy Options:
What other options currently exist?

New or Better Policies:
What other options SHOULD exist?