

Policy Brief

“Effective policy briefs can drive meaningful change in nutrition policies and improve public health outcomes”

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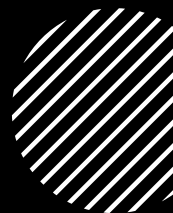


Bringing Evidence to Decision Makers





Outline



Introduction

What is a Policy Brief?
Importance of Policy Briefs in Nutrition



Key Characteristics of a High-Quality Policy Brief

Clear, concise, evidence-based, action-oriented, and visually appealing



Step-by-Step Guide



Real-World Examples from Ethiopia



Summary and Key Takeaways

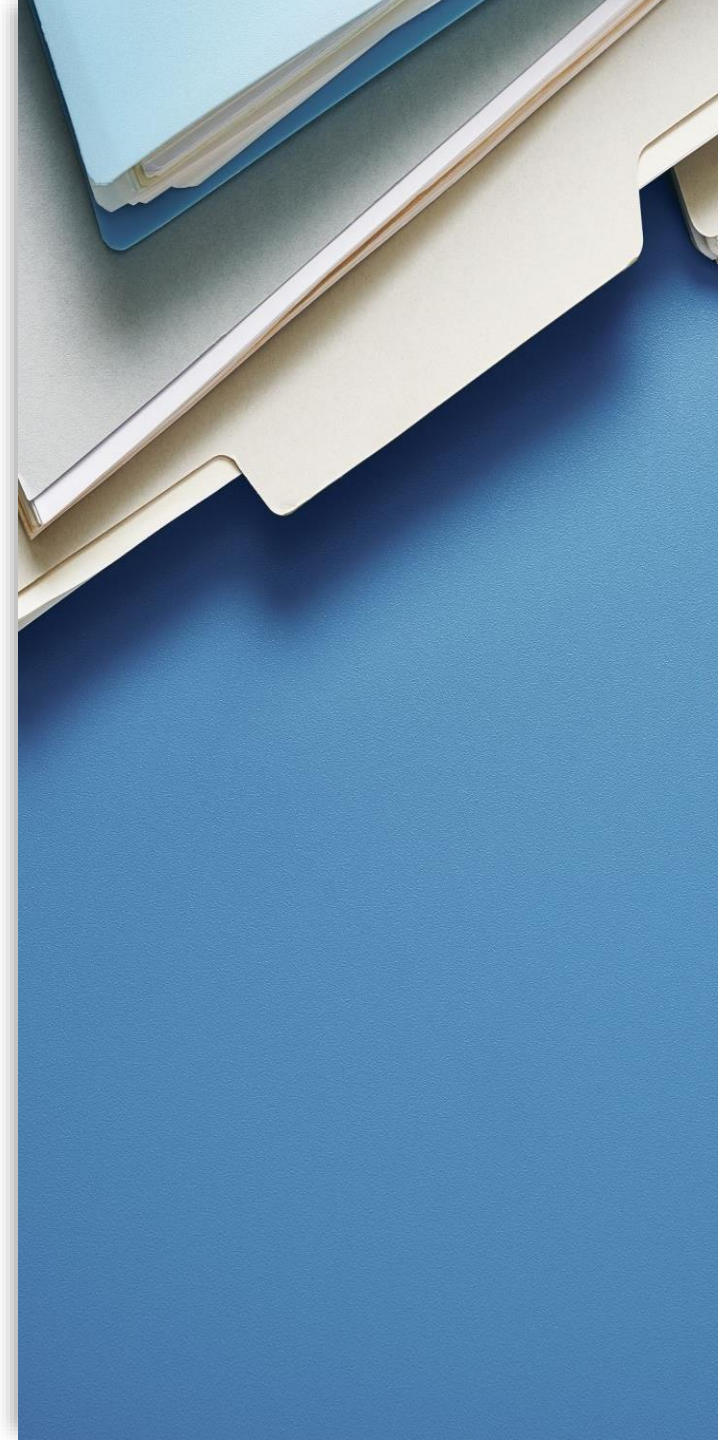
What is a Policy Brief?

A **Policy Brief** is a concise, evidence-based document designed to inform and influence decision-makers.

- Focuses on a specific issue, providing clear recommendations for action.

Purpose:

- Bridge the gap between research and policy.
- Communicate complex information in an accessible way.



Why Policy Briefs Matter in Nutrition


Importance:

- Address critical nutrition challenges.
- Inform policies that improve public health outcomes.
- Provide actionable recom. for stakeholders.

Examples of Use:

- Advocating for school feeding programs.
- Promoting breastfeeding policies.
- Addressing micronutrient deficiencies.

Key Characteristics of a High- Quality Policy Brief

- **Clear and concise:** Avoid jargon and technical language.
 - **Evidence-based:** Grounded in robust research and data.
 - **Action-oriented:** Provide specific, actionable recommendations.
 - **Visually appealing:** Use graphics, charts, and bullet points.
 - **Tailored to the audience:** Address the needs and priorities of decision-makers.
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Step 1: Define the Purpose and Audience

Questions to Ask:

- What is the goal of the policy brief?
- Who is the target audience (e.g., policymakers, NGOs, government officials)?
- What do they need to know, and what action do you want them to take?

Tips:

- Align the brief with the audience's priorities.
- Use language and examples relevant to their context.



Step 2: Identify the Key Issue

Focus Areas:

- A specific nutrition challenge (e.g., stunting, obesity, vitamin A deficiency).
- Evidence of the problem's scale and impact.
- Why it matters to the audience.

Example:

- **Issue:** High rates of childhood stunting in rural areas.
- **Impact:** Long-term effects on health, education, and economic productivity.



Step 3: Gather and Analyse Evidence

Sources of Evidence:

- Peer-reviewed studies, government reports, and global databases (e.g., WHO, UNICEF).
- Local data and case studies.

Analysing Evidence:

- Focus on high-quality, relevant studies.
- Highlight key findings and trends.

Step 4: Develop Key Messages

Characteristics of Effective Messages:

- Clear, concise, and memorable.
- Supported by evidence.
- Action-oriented and solution-focused.

Example:

"Scaling up breastfeeding promotion programs can reduce infant mortality by 13%."



Step 5: Structure the Policy Brief

Recommended Structure:

- **Title:** Catchy and informative.
- **Executive Summary:** Key messages and recommendations.
- **Introduction:** Context and importance of the issue.
- **Problem Statement:** Evidence of the issue's scale and impact.
- **Policy Options:** Possible solutions.
- **Recommendations:** Specific actions for decision-makers.
- **Conclusion:** Call to action.

Step 6: Write the Executive Summary

Purpose:

- Provide a snapshot of the brief for busy decision-makers.

Content:

- Key messages.
- Main recommendations.
- Urgency of the issue.

Tip:

- Keep it to one page or less.

Example:

Title: Addressing Stunting in Ethiopia: A Call to Action

Executive Summary:

Stunting affects 38% of children under five in Ethiopia, hindering their physical and cognitive development. Scaling up nutrition-sensitive agriculture and community-based nutrition programs can reduce stunting by 20% in five years. Immediate action is needed to prioritize funding for these interventions and strengthen multisectoral collaboration.

Step 7: Write the Introduction

Purpose:

- Set the context and explain why the issue matters.

Content:

- Background information.
- Relevance to the audience.
- Clear statement of the problem.

Example:

Title: Addressing Stunting in Ethiopia: A Call to Action

Introduction:

Ethiopia has made significant progress in reducing child mortality, but malnutrition remains a critical challenge. Stunting, a key indicator of chronic malnutrition, affects millions of children, particularly in rural areas. This policy brief highlights evidence-based strategies to address stunting and calls for urgent action to improve child nutrition.

Step 8: Present the Problem Statement

Purpose:

- Highlight the scale and impact of the issue.

Content:

- Data and statistics.
- Case studies or examples.
- Visuals (e.g., graphs, maps).

Example:

Title: Addressing Stunting in Ethiopia: A Call to Action

Problem Statement:

Data: 38% of children under five in Ethiopia are stunted, with rates as high as 50% in regions like Amhara and Tigray.

Impact: Stunting leads to poor school performance, reduced earning potential, and increased risk of chronic diseases.

Visual: A bar graph comparing stunting rates across Ethiopian regions.

Step 9: Propose Policy Options

Purpose:

- Present feasible solutions to the problem.

Content:

- Evidence-based interventions.
- Pros and cons of each option.
- Examples of successful implementation.

Example:

Title: Addressing Stunting in Ethiopia: A Call to Action

Policy Options:

Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture: Promote the cultivation of nutrient-rich crops like orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and pulses.

Community-Based Nutrition Programs: Expand the reach of the Health Extension Program to provide nutrition education and counseling.

Social Safety Nets: Strengthen programs like the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) to improve food access for vulnerable households.

Step 10: Make Recommendations

Purpose:

- Provide clear, actionable steps for decision-makers.

Content:

- Specific, measurable, and realistic actions.
- Prioritized based on impact and feasibility.
- Aligned with the audience's capacity and priorities.

Example:

Title: Addressing Stunting in Ethiopia: A Call to Action

Recommendations:

- Increase funding for nutrition-sensitive agriculture programs by 20% in the next fiscal year.
- Train 10,000 additional Health Extension Workers to deliver community-based nutrition services.
- Integrate nutrition objectives into the PSNP to ensure food security for at-risk populations.

Step 11: Write the Conclusion

Purpose:

- Reinforce the urgency and importance of the issue.

Example:

Title: Addressing Stunting in Ethiopia: A Call to Action

Content:

- Summary of key messages.
- Call to action.
- Contact information for follow-up.

Conclusion:

- Addressing stunting in Ethiopia is critical for achieving the nation's development goals and ensuring a healthy future for its children.
- By investing in evidence-based interventions and fostering multisectoral collaboration, Ethiopia can significantly reduce stunting and improve nutrition outcomes.
- We urge policymakers to prioritize nutrition in national budgets and policies.

Step 12: Use Visuals Effectively

Types of Visuals:

- Graphs, charts, and infographics.
- Photos and illustrations.
- Maps and tables.

Tips:

- Keep visuals simple and easy to understand.
- Use captions to explain visuals.
- Ensure visuals align with the text.

Example:

Title: Addressing Stunting in Ethiopia: A Call to Action

Visuals:

Map of Ethiopia: Highlighting regions with the highest stunting rates.

Infographic: Showing the impact of stunting on education and economic productivity.

Chart: Comparing the cost-effectiveness of different interventions (e.g., nutrition-sensitive agriculture vs. food fortification).

Step 13: Edit and Revise

Editing Tips:

- Use clear, concise language.
- Avoid jargon and technical terms.
- Check for consistency and flow.

Review Process:

- Seek feedback from colleagues and stakeholders.
- Test the brief with a sample audience.

Example:

Title: Addressing Stunting in Ethiopia: A Call to Action

Editing Tips Applied:

- Simplified language: Changed “*linear growth retardation*” to “*stunting.*”
- Added a case study: Included a success story from Tigray where community-based nutrition programs reduced stunting by 15% in two years.
- Removed technical jargon: Replaced “*micronutrient deficiencies*” with “*lack of essential vitamins and minerals.*”

Step 14: Format and Design

Design Principles:

- Use a professional, clean layout.
- Stick to a consistent font and color scheme.
- Include headers, bullet points, and white space for readability.

Tools:

- Microsoft Word, Canva, or Adobe InDesign.

Example:

Title: Addressing Stunting in Ethiopia: A Call to Action

Design Elements:

- **Header:** “**Addressing Stunting in Ethiopia**” in bold, with the Ethiopian flag colors (green, yellow, red).
- **Bullet Points:** Used to list recommendations and policy options.
- **White Space:** Ensured the brief is not overcrowded, with clear section breaks.

Step 15: Disseminate the Policy Brief

Strategies for Dissemination:

- Share with key stakeholders via email or meetings.
- Publish on websites, social media, or newsletters.
- Present at conferences or workshops.

Follow-Up:

- Engage with decision-makers to discuss the brief.
- Monitor the impact of the brief on policy decisions.

Example:

Title: Addressing Stunting in Ethiopia: A Call to Action

Dissemination Strategies:

- Shared with the MoH, EPHI, and regional health bureaus.
- Presented at the National Nutrition Conference in Addis Ababa.
- Published on the Ethiopian Public Health Institute's website and shared via social media platforms.

Summary

- Policy briefs are a powerful tool for translating nutrition research into action.
- A high-quality brief is clear, evidence-based, and tailored to the audience.
- Follow a structured process to ensure impact.

Example:

- Stunting remains a critical public health issue in Ethiopia, but evidence-based interventions can drive progress.
- Policy briefs are a powerful tool for communicating research and influencing decision-makers.
- By following a structured process, we can create impactful briefs that lead to real change.

Key Takeaways

- Focus on the audience's needs and priorities.
- Use visuals and concise language to enhance readability.
- Provide actionable recommendations backed by evidence.

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"Together, we can ensure that every child in Ethiopia has the opportunity to grow and thrive."

A vibrant watercolor illustration of a butterfly, rendered in shades of purple, pink, orange, and blue. The butterfly is positioned centrally, with its wings spread, and is surrounded by a soft, ethereal glow. The background is a light, warm peach color, accented with small, scattered dark purple and orange dots. The text 'Thank you' is written in a black, elegant cursive font, centered within a white rectangular area that overlaps the butterfly's body.

Thank
you