

Applying Participatory Decision-Making Processes to Support Smallholder Farmers' Actions for Nutrition-Sensitive and Sustainable Local Agri-Food Systems

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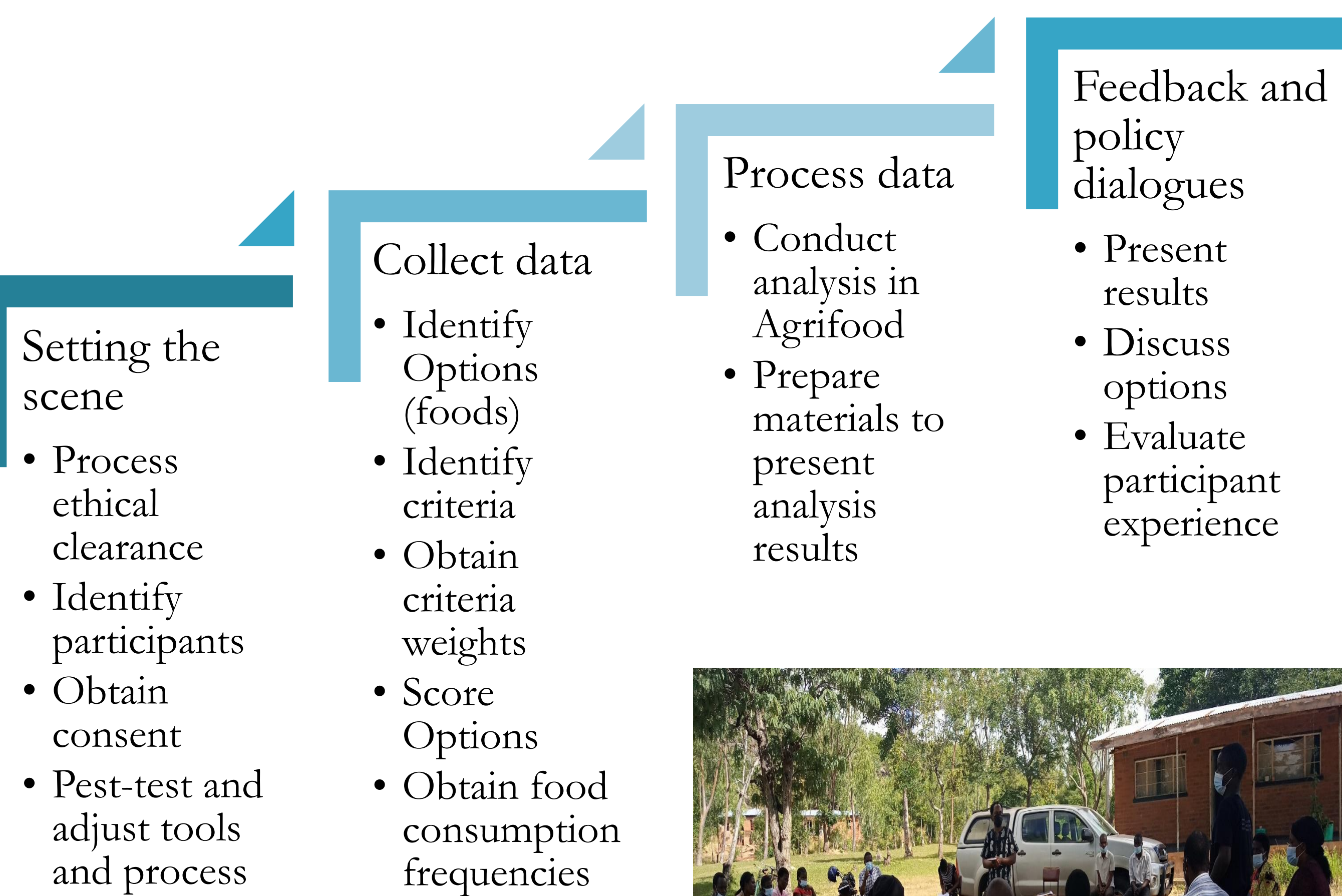
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1. Background

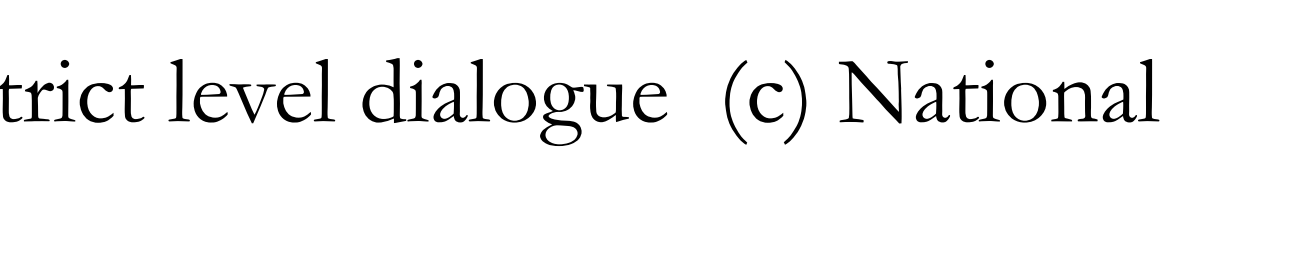
- “Agrifood” is a novel decision-making tool that supports actors in the agrifood system to design and implement Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture (NSA).
- A key challenge in designing and implementing interventions to maximise yield, nutrition, incomes and environmental goals, is the complexity of working across diverse sectors and stakeholders, whose interests, values and power vary.
- The Agrifood study sought to develop processes and local capacity for using “Agrifood” to support NSA programme decisions that would improve nutritional quality of local food systems and diets while considering gender equity, livelihoods, agro-ecological intensification and sustainability.
- Study implemented in Malawi (Kasungu and Ntcheu districts): 2019-2021.

2. Process

- Facilitated dialogue sessions involving actors from agriculture, nutrition and environment at community, district and national levels.



(a) Community level dialogue (b) District level dialogue (c) National level dialogue



3. Findings

- Agrifood tool illuminates diverging perspectives among multiple actors.
- a. The criteria weighting illustrated differences in priorities among the FRN, Environmental committees and Care groups.

Criteria for selecting foods to promote	Stakeholder' scores (1=most preferred)		
	Agric	Nutri	Envi
Used to the food type	1	7	0
Nutrients availability	9	1	0
Easy to produce/rear	5	2	1
Availability / accessibility	3	6	3
Multiple benefits	6	3	5
Provision of farm inputs	7	5	2
Seasonality	10	10	7
Not adapted to community	8	9	0
Productivity	4	4	4
Income/for sale	2	8	6

- b. Whilst community-level stakeholders valued diverse food sources including indigenous cereals (millet) and vegetables, the district and national level stakeholders emphasised mainstream crops such as maize and exotic vegetables.

- But actor perspectives can shift when Agrifood tool is facilitated through dialogue.

“This session has greatly enlightened me. I feel there is need for us to jointly engage communities in dialogue before introducing any development project. This will ensure that we are at the same page with communities we claim to serve”. DAECC member, Ntcheu District.
24/02/2021

- Power dynamics affect facilitation of agrifood tool (e.g., influence on food choices)

4. Next steps

- Develop procedures and build stakeholder capacity for integrating three participatory decision-making tools (Agrifood, PICSA and soil testing tool kit): 2022-2023

5. Acknowledgement

- Financial support from Mc Knight Foundation (CCRP)
- All collaborators including participating communities