

**DECISION MAKING IN THE GUATEMALAN FOOD AND  
NUTRITION SECURITY POLICY COMMUNITY:  
REFLECTIONS ON 'GOOD' PROCESS**

**A Thesis**

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**by**

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## **ABSTRACT**

There have been many recent efforts to develop national policies, strategies and programs for the reduction of chronic malnutrition and food insecurity in Guatemala. While there are recognizable strengths of the decision making processes in the development of these policies, strategies and programs, there are also many apparent challenges within the Guatemalan Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) policy community. Previous findings show that among the main challenges are 1) fragmented and competing efforts of different actors and institutions, 2) a lack of true, sustained commitment, and 3) inter-personal and inter-institutional aspects such as rivalry, differing perspectives, values and interests, lack of trust and the desire to maintain bureaucratic territory.

Challenges like these also have been observed within other national nutrition policy communities, the international nutrition community and policy communities in general. These limitations have led many scholars and practitioners, especially those outside of nutrition, to seek out improved approaches for decision making. However, decision making in policy communities typically lacks processes for systematic, open and inclusive dialogue, argumentation and deliberation in order to address these issues. These observations and the researchers' prior experiences in Guatemala led to asking the following questions: "what is a 'good' decision making process?" "why does a 'good' process matter?" and "are people willing to accept the resulting decisions resulting from a 'good' process even though they do not agree on all of the substantive issues involved?"

This research was a case study designed to provide an opportunity for actors in the Guatemalan FNS policy community to reflect upon their own perspectives and

experiences with decision making in this policy community in order to explore what they think constitutes a 'good' process and both the importance and desired consequences of such a process.

Results revealed that 1) a 'good' process is valued by this group of actors, 2) literature-based characteristics of such a process resonate considerably with them, and 3) they are willing to participate in a process like this, which they feel is needed and possible in this context, and to accept the resulting decisions.

These findings can help provide the actors of the FNS policy community in Guatemala with the awareness that other actors in this community also feel that a 'good' process is needed in this context and that they are willing to participate in and accept the resulting decisions, as long as they result from a 'good' process. These points of common understanding can serve as the foundation to initiate conversation about 1) the need for such a process and 2) the feasibility of carrying out a formal decision making process in order to improve actions around the national strategies for the reduction of chronic malnutrition and food insecurity in Guatemala. These findings also provide a decision making framework that can be adapted to other settings where the national or international nutrition communities have a need to form collective decisions about interventions, policies, strategies and related issues.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Renée Hill was born in Sacramento, California, where she grew up and completed two years at American River Junior College. After transferring to the University of California, Davis as a psychology major, she decided to try Comparative Literature and Spanish. She participated in the Education Abroad Program through which she spent a year living in Santiago, Chile and studying at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. Upon her return to Davis, CA she settled on Nutritional Sciences as her major. Then after nearly seven years as a full time student she graduated with a B.S. in Nutritional Sciences and a mention in Community Nutrition. Upon graduating she moved back to Santiago, Chile where she worked at the Institute of Nutrition and Food Technology for two years before moving to Ithaca, New York to attend Graduate School at Cornell University. She has finished her M.S. in International Nutrition in absentia now that she lives with her love Carlos and adorable cat Gizmo in Albion, Washington.

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## I. Introduction

The present research is a case study of the Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) policy community in Guatemala, which was based on the learning from an earlier exploratory study to gain an understanding of the nutrition policy-making community, recent commitment building and decision making processes within this community (Hill et al. 2008). The earlier study consisted of 50 face-to-face interviews, as well as field site visits and review of relevant documents. Findings showed that while there are many recognizable strengths in the decision making processes for national FNS plans, strategies and programs in Guatemala, there are also many apparent challenges or barriers. Among the main challenges are 1) fragmented and competing efforts of different actors<sup>1</sup> and institutions, 2) a lack of true, sustained commitment, and 3) interpersonal and inter-institutional aspects such as rivalry, differing perspectives, values and interests, lack of trust and the desire to maintain bureaucratic territory.

Guatemala is not the only country facing challenges like these in decision making<sup>2</sup> processes for improving nutrition. These also have been observed within other national nutrition policy communities, the international nutrition community and policy communities in general. Decision making in policy communities typically places strong emphasis on evidence-based or expert-driven decision making and

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<sup>1</sup> The term *actors*, here and throughout this thesis, refers to the individuals who participate in various ways and to varying degrees in the Food and Nutrition Security policy community in Guatemala. (I added this in light of Bob and Mark's comments/suggestions)

<sup>2</sup> The policy process includes a wide range of activities by many organizations related to the development and implementation of policy, including research, analysis and evaluation, advocacy and recommendations by varied organizations, approval of overarching policies by national authorities, decisions by implementing organizations that may depart from official national policies and occasionally termination of programs or policies by individual organizations (Clark 2002). While this is the sense of 'the policy process' in the literature, the term 'decision making' is used throughout this paper to refer to this entire suite of activities. This is to conform to the Spanish-equivalent term used in the interviews (*toma de decisiones*) which, in fact, is interpreted by the respondents to refer to this entire suite of decisions.

devotes much less attention to processes for systematic, open and inclusive dialogue, argumentation and deliberation, which are the foundation for sound public policy in democratic societies (Clark, 2002). These tendencies place constraints on who is involved, which values and interests are considered, and consequentially the ability to identify, secure and sustain the common interest. There are many consequences of policy decisions that are made in this way. These include compromised buy-in from key actors for the implementation of policies and programs, limited support from beneficiaries whose true needs are not being met, and limited effectiveness and sustainability of these policies and programs.

These limitations have led many scholars and practitioners to seek out improved approaches for decision making in the common interest (Brunner 2002; Clark 2002; Kingdon 2003). This literature and previous observations in Guatemala, led the researchers to raise the following questions: “what elements make for a ‘good’ decision making process?”, “why does a ‘good’ process matter?”, “what are the desired results of such a process?” and “are people willing to accept the resulting decisions resulting from a ‘good’ process even though they do not agree on all of the substantive issues involved?”

The present research was designed to address these questions within the context of the Guatemalan FNS policy community. The purpose of this study was to provide an opportunity for these actors to reflect upon their personal perspectives and experiences with decision making in the FNS policy community and explore how these actors describe what makes a ‘good’ process and both the importance and desired consequences of such a process. It is intended that reflection of their viewpoints back to the entire group of participants will initiate conversation about the need for such a

process and the feasibility of carrying out a formal decision making process in order to improve actions around the national strategies for the reduction of chronic malnutrition and food insecurity in Guatemala. This type of research can help us, both as ‘outsider’ researchers and as ‘insider’ participants, to understand what process principles are socially appropriate and relevant to this specific context in order to support achievement of these national goals.

## **II. Background and Literature Review**

### **A. Nutrition policy decision making**

#### **1. Recent developments in the Guatemalan nutrition policy community**

Guatemala is a developing country in Central America whose rate of chronic malnutrition is the highest in the region and among the highest globally (WHO 2008). Half (49.3%) of the children under 5 years of age are chronically malnourished, or growth stunted (HAZ < -2SD) (WHO 2007); this rate is 55.5% among children in rural areas. The rate of chronic malnutrition is even higher (67%) among indigenous populations (ENSMI 2002), which are estimated to make up 41% of the country's population (INE 2002). Malnutrition has significant impacts on many aspects of human and economic development such as cognition, work capacity and economic productivity (Hoddinott et al. 2008; Victora et al. 2008). Moderate to high food insecurity<sup>3</sup> is widespread throughout the southern region of the country (MFEWS 2008). Guatemala has committed to achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals (UN 2008), and there have been many efforts in recent years to address these problems and improve nutrition and food security throughout the country.

In order to document recent processes of commitment development and decision making for planning national efforts to reduce chronic malnutrition in Guatemala, Renée Hill (Cornell University) and Wendy González (University of South Carolina) collected information, via interviews, documentation and field visits, in the country in June 2007. We carried out 50 interviews with actors in the *national nutrition*

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<sup>3</sup> Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO, World Food Summit 1996).

*community* (a term which refers to all actors from different sectors and levels, involved with different roles and to varying degrees, in decision making related to nutrition policy in a country) from government institutions, international institutions, national and international non-government institutions and academic institutions. We also collected documents, such as press releases, meeting notes, surveys, project documents and presentations, and visited field sites in order to observe activities of two national programs (PRDC and CB, see below) and talk to beneficiaries and implementers of these programs. Through this initial exploratory research we learned about the recent efforts to build commitment and make key decisions regarding the reduction of chronic malnutrition in Guatemala. We also realized that in Guatemala there is no apparent separation between efforts to improve nutrition and those to improve food security, and that nutrition is approached within the framework of food and nutrition security. Therefore, the *national nutrition community* we were aiming to study is more accurately called the *national food and nutrition security (FNS) community* in the Guatemalan context, as it is referred to throughout the remainder of this paper.

There have been several recent efforts to address issues of chronic malnutrition and food insecurity in the country, most recently during the presidential term of Oscar Berger (2004-7). At the beginning of his term, the Commission “National Hunger Coalition” (FNCH) was created and engaged a technical team to study the multiple existing versions of proposals for a national food and nutrition security policy. In 2004, after a long process of analysis and revisions, in which actors from civil society participated through the National Food Security Table (MESA)<sup>4</sup>, the National Food and Nutrition Security policy was established as the official national policy. In 2005,

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<sup>4</sup> A civil society organization that watches over food and nutrition security issues in the country

the National Food and Nutrition Security System (SINASAN) law (Decree # 32-2005) was passed by the National Congress, under which government structures for carrying out the law were created (See Figure 1- Diagram of SINASAN structure). The National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONASAN) was established as the governing body of SINASAN, headed by the Vice-president of the country and with representation of ten ministries and secretariats, private sector and civil society. The Secretariat of Food and Nutrition Security (SESAN) was established as the coordinating body of the Strategic Plan for Food and Nutrition Security (PESAN). The Instance for Consultation and Social Participation (INCOPAS) and the Group of Supporting Institutions (GIA) were also established in order to integrate various civil society sectors and to provide technical as well as financial and operational support, respectively, in the planning of decision making about FNS.

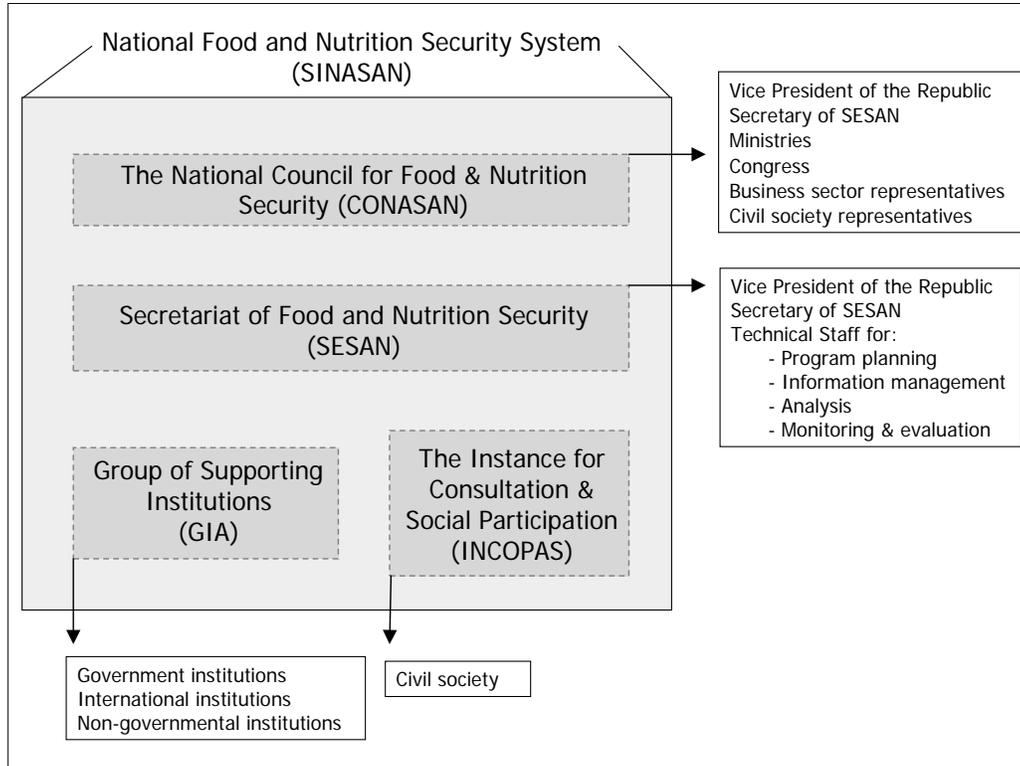


Figure 1. Diagram of SINASAN Structure

During this same period, the planning and implementation of two programs began- PRDC and CB (see below) - with the shared goal of improving the nutritional status of children. The Program for the Reduction of Chronic Malnutrition (PRDC) is coordinated by SESAN with the main objective to reduce the prevalence of chronic malnutrition in children under 5 years of age by 50% by the year 2016. This program is based on 6 main components- basic health services, food and nutrition education, breastfeeding and complementary feeding, water and basic hygiene, improvement of the family economy and community organization. This program is currently being implemented and evaluated, however, as of 2008 with the government of President Álvaro Colom it has been renamed as the National Strategy for the Reduction of Chronic Malnutrition (ENRDC). The program Creciendo Bien (CB) was coordinated by the Secretariat for Social Work of the First Lady (SOSEP) with the main objective to develop the capacity of women for the prevention of malnutrition in children under 5 years of age through the improvement of dietary practices in the family and community. However, this program was discontinued under the new government.

Achievements and challenges of decision making processes for the development of these government structures and programs emerged through systematic analysis of the collected information. A draft report of these findings was sent to each of the 50 actors interviewed, asking for comments and suggestions which were then incorporated into the final draft of the report “Improving Food Security and Nutrition in Guatemala: Achievements and Challenges” (Hill et al. 2008). The strength of these recent government efforts to improve the nutritional status of children in Guatemala lies in many factors. One factor was the efforts and strategic capacity of one high level champion, which led to significant political commitment and financial support from

both national and international institutions. Also, the government structures were created with a strong multisectoral vision, backed by the law, recognizing the importance of involving multiple government and non-government sectors in the development and implementation of actions to reach the objectives that the government set. This vision also led to the inclusion of a wide range of actors in the decision making processes. National and international institutions have played key roles in supporting these government initiatives and in supporting the development of action plans. In addition, there have been several efforts to create spaces for the participation of civil society in the development of the FNS Policy (through MESA), and raising awareness of the existence, causes and consequences of chronic malnutrition and food insecurity among the population and in developing plans for future action.

These efforts have been sustained by strong political support reflected in the positioning of chronic malnutrition and food and nutrition security on the national political agenda, the development of certain levels of commitment to support national strategies, and the maintenance of this commitment in the new governmental period. Álvaro Colom has placed improving nutrition among his top ten priorities and has recently (2008) supported the initiation of a conditional cash transfer program (Mi Familia Progresá), dependent on health care visits and elementary school attendance of children.

Although there are many recognizable strengths in these decision making processes in Guatemala, there are also many apparent challenges or barriers that emerged through the analysis of these fifty interviews. First, there are many different actors involved from different institutions whose efforts remain fragmented and often competing. This

challenge reflects the difficulty of coordinating these actors, despite efforts to do so. Second, although these issues have been present in the political agendas during recent years, many actors feel that there remains a lack of true, sustained commitment; they feel that strong, but shared, leadership is important for the creation and maintenance of such commitment. Third, inter-personal and inter-institutional aspects, such as rivalry, differing perspectives, values and interests, lack of trust and the desire to maintain bureaucratic territory, present great challenges for the clear and continuous communication needed for effective coordination and collaboration. Fourth, although there were many different actors involved, many people in the national nutrition community feel that they were excluded from these processes or feel that their views were not taken into consideration in deciding upon strategies to be taken. This challenge reflects the lack of a clearly defined decision making process in the nutrition community as well as the lack of consensus among the actors as to what an acceptable or appropriate decision making process would look like.

These challenges led the researchers to make some process-related suggestions, which were sent to each of the 50 actors interviewed in the draft and final reports. These suggestions included the need to clarify: a) the causes and nature of malnutrition, b) the causes and nature of food insecurity, c) the importance of these problems as public policy goals, and d) the institutional roles, responsibilities, authority and accountability. Since there are multiple and competing perspectives on these issues across the various actors, we emphasized that one of the main priorities is for the actors to agree on the types of processes and participation that are needed in order to decide these four issues. As outside observers of this context, we believe that there is currently enough disagreement between the main actors to justify the investment of resources for the planning and implementation of an open, transparent, and inclusive

process to solve these disagreements. We also clarified that this suggested process will not guarantee agreement between all the stakeholders; however, it will generate better understanding, trust, and acceptance of the process, which are the basis to build solidarity in the effort to reach the common goals.

Guatemala is not the only country facing challenges like these in decision making processes for improving nutrition. As described in the following section, these same types of issues have been observed within the national nutrition policy communities of other countries and within the global nutrition community as well.

## **2. Decision making in nutrition policy communities**

The national nutrition community<sup>5</sup> of a country consists of all of the actors that are involved in the development and implementation of policies, strategies or programs for the improvement of nutritional status of the country's population. These actors may be from government institutions, international organizations, national and international NGOs, academia, the private sector or civil society. They form an informal system of individuals and institutions that may or may not work together in a formal or organized manner. This *national nutrition community* and its actors may also be part of the *international nutrition community*, given that there is a lot of interaction between national and international nutrition policy actors and that many of the international actors are working at the national level in countries. As proposed in the recent Lancet Series on Nutrition (Morris et al. 2008), the *international nutrition community* is defined by the financial, intellectual and personal linkages that bind

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<sup>5</sup> The term *system* is used in the Lancet Series and by other authors. However, since we chose to use the term *community* in Guatemala to distinguish between this and the formal system (SINASAN) created under the law, the term *community* is used throughout this paper.

together transnational organizations who work to support efforts for the reduction of maternal and child malnutrition.

Just as there are many actors in the international nutrition system (Morris et al. 2008), national nutrition systems also tend to have many actors working, whether or not together, on the same issues or towards the same goals. In many cases a variety of government and non-government sectors are represented in the national nutrition system given that a multi-sectoral approach is commonly proposed, planned and/or implemented to reach nutrition-related goals. In such cases, these actors are also considered to be part of the national nutrition system. Although there are many actors in this informal system, they are not necessarily working together. National nutrition systems are not only affected by the consequences of the fragmentation within them, but are also affected by the fragmentation of the international nutrition system. For example, inconsistent strategies are often proposed and supported by international actors while overriding locally generated efforts (Bryce et al. 2008). The international nutrition system is composed of many actors doing their own thing, their own way and with little or no coordination between actors and efforts. The same has been shown to be true of national nutrition systems (Bryce et al. 2008).

There are also many other challenges that contribute to the difficulties in coordination among actors in nutrition systems, which are even further heightened when actors in national nutrition systems need to coordinate for carrying out national multi-sectoral plans instead of independent sectoral efforts. The UNICEF conceptual framework (UNICEF 1997) has guided much of the thinking around the underlying and immediate causes of malnutrition in recent years. Although this framework has provided for a greater understanding of the complexity and multi-sectoral nature of

these causes and therefore, the need for multi-sectoral approaches for improving them, it still remains quite unclear as to how this type of an approach can be achieved. Multi-sectoral plans for improving nutrition have been encouraged by the international nutrition community for several decades and many countries have established national nutrition councils to serve as the central structure for multi-sectoral planning of nutrition-related development initiatives and to make nutrition more visible among national priorities. The disappointing results have been attributed to the erroneous assumption that nutrition would receive a strong political commitment, the failure to anchor nutrition programs in established ministries, insufficient authority and resources, and bureaucratic as well as national politics (Berg 1987; Field 1987; Levinson 1995). However, these analyses were highly focused on issues of structure, overlooking the lack of clear decision making processes within these formal structures and the importance of informal (non-state) structures and processes in shaping national nutrition policy. A more recent publication from the health sector emphasizes how the multiple actors and interests in complex policy environments even further complicate decision making processes for intersectoral action (PHAC 2007). However, solutions offered also focus on institutional arrangements and improving capacities and commitment, while further leaving the development of tools and approaches for decision making processes for future investigation.

Just as in many policy communities, there is a tendency in nutrition policy communities to look solely towards knowledge or evidence for decision making. For example, the international nutrition community has recently placed tremendous weight on the Lancet Series for Maternal and Child Undernutrition (Lancet 2008), which largely emphasizes technical and evidence-based decision making for the development

of nutrition strategies. Although an important piece for decision making, such a tool alone is often not the appropriate piece needed for overcoming these challenges.

There is also evidence of a lot of existing contention around technical and operational issues related to the reduction of malnutrition among actors in national nutrition communities (Pelletier 2008). Observations of nutrition communities have revealed that although technical aspects of these decisions (i.e. *what* to do) and approaches are the most advanced, socio-political aspects (i.e. *how* to do it *in a particular socio-political context*) lack a clear understanding and attention in decision making processes within these communities (Menon et al. 2008). There is little attention paid to the creation of processes to address issues within policy communities in general, as well as in those specific to nutrition (Pelletier 2002). This lack of attention to socio-political aspects and specific processes is also reflected in the lack of research on these issues in nutrition literature. Given this, and that different government sectors are generally not accustomed to planning and working together, the multi-sectoral approaches for the improvement of nutrition, although they may be technically and operationally sound on paper, often lack organized, planned processes for communication and collaboration between actors and sectors in practice.

There are many reasons for why nutrition policy processes are approached this way, but one specific to the nutrition policy community is related to the influence of people with a given amount of power. A common scenario seen in nutrition communities is when individual or institutional actors focus on and promote a certain intervention that they are particularly interested in even though it might not be clear that that particular intervention is the best option for a particular context (Bryce et al. 2008; Pelletier 2008). The influences and consequences of overlooking the common interest in

fulfilling individual or institutional interests in this way will be further described in Section B below. Another reason for the lack of adequate attention to and analysis of the nutrition policy process is a difference of paradigms. The methodologies that lend to adequate analysis of the socio-political domain (e.g. qualitative interviews, case studies, etc.) are not generally accepted as rigorous by the majority of actors in nutrition communities, who also tend to be focused on evidence-based and expert-driven decision making (Menon et al. 2008). In addition, there is no agreed upon framework for thinking about nutrition policy (Pelletier 2008), thereby acting as both a cause and consequence of this lack of attention to socio-political considerations in nutrition policy communities.

There are many consequences of these challenges. Poor communication and unresolved contention between actors in a national nutrition system often impede progress towards reaching nutrition goals by slowing down consensus-building processes or eliminating them altogether. This disagreement further exacerbates the fragmentation of the nutrition community, given that actors are polarized by their differing perspectives and values (Pelletier 2008). The overall result is that there is no one clear path for national nutrition plans, thereby making it difficult to make decisions, to follow through with the decisions that are made, and to count on sustained buy-in from the necessary actors for carrying out policies and implementing programs, as well as from beneficiaries of these programs. These gaps in communication and coordination result in difficulties in decision making, as well as the implementation, sustainability and effectiveness of national policies and programs.

Although there is growing acknowledgement within the international nutrition community that all of the above issues are hindering progress towards achieving

nutrition goals nationally and globally (2006; Bank 2006; Bryce et al. 2008; Menon et al. 2008; Morris et al. 2008; Pelletier 2008), there is still a lack of research about these issues in nutrition policy communities. The dearth of attention to and research addressing socio-political issues that affect international and national nutrition policy communities is both reflected in and exacerbated by the lack of understanding of what is really going on in the socio-political realm of decision making, the lack of conversation around these issues within nutrition policy systems and among international actors, and also the lack of time and money dedicated to further understanding of these issues (Pelletier 2002; Pelletier 2008). Recently drawing attention to these issues, the Lancet Series on Maternal and Child Undernutrition identified the need for strategic capacity in national nutrition communities and called for the maintenance of functional nutrition systems in order to achieve national nutrition goals (Bryce et al. 2008) . Although the focus of recommendations as to *how* these changes can be achieved are limited to organizational structures, capacity building and research, this is one form of evidence that there is increasing clarity that national nutrition policy communities could benefit from further attention paid to process. The next step would be addressing the need for processes to improve communication, collaboration and coordination in decision making processes.

Our experiences with nutrition policy communities, and particularly in Guatemala, led the researchers to raise the following questions: “what elements make for a ‘good’ decision making process?”, “why does a ‘good’ process matter?”, “what are the desired results of such a process?” and “are people willing to accept the resulting decisions resulting from a ‘good’ process even though they do not agree on all of the substantive issues involved?” The present research was designed to address these questions within the context of the Guatemalan FNS policy community. These

questions will be further discussed in the next section in relation to decision making processes in policy communities in general. All of the existing issues that have been discussed in terms of nutrition policy communities throughout this section also exist in other policy communities. In the following section I will discuss how these complex issues also exist throughout policy communities in general. It will become clear that the nutrition community is not alone in this need to clarify and focus on the characteristics of good process and that other policy communities could also greatly benefit from a focus on issues related to decision making processes. This discussion will provide for a clear understanding of how and why these research questions were developed to look specifically at the Guatemalan FNS policy community to ask questions about issues that affect policy communities everywhere, in many contexts and surrounding many different policy issues.

## **B. Decision making in the policy process**

### **1. What is “policy”?**

Although there are many existing interpretations of what “policy” means, Lasswell and McDougal’s definition will be used as a basis for this analysis- a social process of authoritative decision making by which the members of a community clarify and secure their common interests (Lasswell and McDougal 1992). The overall goal of this social decision making process, of developing and implementing policy, is to change aspects of the public system in order to improve the lives of the people who live in this community, which is comprised of individuals who have self interests (interests that benefit only part of the community at the expense of the rest of the community) and public or common interests (interests that are widely shared and demanded on behalf of the whole community) (Brunner 2002; Clark 2002). Although the normative goal of

policy making is to resolve societal problems in the common interest (Clark 2002), there is much debate about whether the common interest can be concretely defined by a community. Some feel that there is virtually never full agreement on what the public interest really is (Stone 2002). Some have stated that although it is difficult to define or secure the common interest, given the complex divisions of authority between institutions and individuals involved in decision making processes, commitment to finding common ground in policy as a means of advancing the common interest is the very role of democratic governance (Brunner 2002). Others have emphasized that neither practitioners nor academics have a clear idea of what can or should be expected by consensus building, thus emphasizing the need to define criteria by which to evaluate consensus building processes (Innes and Booher 1999).

As with the definition of policy, there is also much diversity in existing descriptions and explanations of the policy making process. Given that how we think about the policy process influences our approaches, as both actors in these processes and analysts of them, I will point out three limitations of typical descriptions of policy processes that affect the approaches taken by both actors in these processes and analysts of them. First, descriptions of public policy making are typically reduced to a set of processes that include setting the agenda, specifying alternatives, choosing an alternative and implementing the decision. However, it has been shown that policy making processes do not in fact follow an orderly set of steps as implied by such a definition and it is not always clear how an issue gets on the policy agenda or why some issues are considered more than others in venues of policy dialogue (Kingdon 2003). This stagiest model also entirely neglects the reality and implications of unequal power in the policy process, which can interfere with efforts to clarify and secure the common interest.

A second limitation is a strong focus on policy outcomes with little attention paid to the decision making processes through which these were arrived at or determined (Majone 1989). Although evaluating the success of decision making based on process alone potentially overlooks many issues of great importance to participants (Santos and Chess 2003), several authors have shown that participants value the process by which decisions are made in their evaluations of final decisions or outcomes (Lauber 1996; Rowe and Frewer 2004). Moreover, the lack of attention given to the decision making processes themselves has perpetuated our lack of understanding of the complexities, the pitfalls and importance of policy-making processes as both actors in them and analysts of them.

A third limitation is the lack of understanding and/or acceptance that one correct answer, in the form of a policy, does not exist for the complex social issues we face (Majone 1989; Stone 2002). Expecting the emergence of a “magic bullet” policy only further perpetuates our focus on outcomes and the lack of appreciation of and humility concerning the complex, dynamic and uncertain systems that lie between policies and outcomes. This consequently leads to over-promotion of favored strategies and the neglect of adaptive implementation based on continuous monitoring of inputs, processes and outputs (Bovens and Hart 1996; Brunner et al. 2005; Roberfroid et al. 2007). This limited focus also weakens attention, thought and effort dedicated to the development of strategies that recognize and address these complexities.

Having acknowledged that an understanding of the decision making processes within the policy community is important in order to analyze observed actions within them,

the following section begins by describing how decision making in policy communities is typically carried out.

## **2. How typical decision making processes in policy communities diverge from the ideal**

**Who is involved, what they contribute and how contributions are shared.** This description of decision making processes within policy communities looks at who is involved, what they contribute and the processes by which these contributions are shared in policy making. This description is based on research in industrialized countries, with much less being known about the process in less developed countries.

There are many actors who might contribute to policy agendas and lists of alternatives both within government (President, Congress, bureaucrats in the executive branch and other government structures) and outside government (media, interest groups, political parties and the general public). However, with certain types of decisions in some political systems, actual decision making about which policy options to choose and implement tends to be carried out by a small number of individuals, usually elected officials or bureaucrats with technical or specialized knowledge about a particular aspect of the issue(s) at hand, whom we often label as “experts” or “specialists” (Menon et al. 2008). There is a strong tendency for policy decisions to be focused on the available scientific or technical knowledge of these experts and implicitly their values, thereby giving much less attention to other types and sources of information and values relevant to the needs of the people whom the policies will be implemented by or for (Fischer 2000). This typical authoritarian, technocratic policy-making is limited not only by the type of individuals present and the types of information that are

elicited, but also by the decision making processes in which the exchange of information occurs. Typically, discussions of policy alternatives lack structured processes for open dialogue, argumentation and deliberation about all types of information brought by the wide range of actors involved in and affected by the intended policy (Majone 1989). Next, I will explain why some critics of traditional policy-making processes argue that this form of decision making is not ideal.

As shown here, decision making processes in policy communities often face constraints in terms of who is involved, what they contribute and how their contributions are shared. These constraints limit the ability to define the common interest in decision making processes and to design and implement policy that makes the best possible attempt at serving the common interest of the whole community. While technical complexities make the knowledge of experts invaluable, technical expertise does not and cannot tell the whole story (Stern et al. 1996; Fischer 2000; Brunner et al. 2005). For example, policy or program implementers and community members, who will be affected by these policies or beneficiaries of programs, have contextual knowledge of both the problems that call for a policy or program to address them and the systems through which the policy or program will be implemented. These policy or program implementers and potential beneficiaries are often not included in relevant policy decision making processes, leaving decisions in the hands of the “specialists.” However, it is clear that their “expert” judgments do not provide uncontested solutions or answers and these specialists “possess no analytical wizardry capable of resolving our pressing societal problems” (Fischer 2000).

**Interpretations, values and interests.** Not only are there different types and sources of knowledge, but also different types of information (knowledge, interpretations,

values and interests), and sources of these as well, which together are essential to consider in the development of policies that truly aim to serve the common interest (Majone 1989; Pelletier et al. 1999; Fischer 2000). First, it is necessary to recognize that information and evidence are typically incomplete, fragmented and contestable, often capable of being interpreted differently by each individual and often strategically withheld. Part of what we consider to be our “knowledge” is our interpretations of the information that we receive, and there are multiple possible interpretations of any given amount of information (Fischer 2000; Stone 2002). While different interpretations of information or data are one source of disagreement about policy issues, explicit discussion of them can broaden understandings of policy issues and contribute to creative ideas otherwise not considered (Fisher et al. 1991).

Values are also essential to the discussion of policy issues and efforts to serve the common interest. Policy analysts typically assert that their analyses are empirically verifiable and value-free, and view it as improper to introduce personal judgments about values (Tribe 1972). However, a policy cannot be designed based solely on what the evidence shows will work, or what is referred to in the nutrition community as efficacy and effectiveness<sup>6</sup>. This is one important piece, but does not capture the whole story. The very definition and framing of the problem has underlying value implications, as does the selection of outcome variables to be measured and the methods for measuring them (Rochefort and Cobb 1994; Kingdon 2003). How people at different levels will react to the policy, the goals and principles they subscribe to, and the policy’s overall effectiveness also depends on the values held regarding the

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<sup>6</sup> Efficacy refers to the impact of an intervention under ideal conditions, when the components of the intervention are delivered directly to all individuals in the target group. Effectiveness refers to the impact of an intervention under real world conditions, when programs are scaled up to reach large populations (Allen and Gillespie 2001).

policy, its elements or the consequences of it. If, based on their values, people refuse to accept the policy, comply with its implementation or participate in a program, then it is unlikely that it is fulfilling the overall goal of serving the common interest.

**Value implications- an example from FNS in Guatemala**

The following example from the Guatemalan nutrition policy context shows the importance of bringing personal and institutional values into decision making processes for policy design (Hill et al. 2008). A Guatemalan government institution, whose mandated role is to coordinate all nutrition actors under the national nutrition strategy for the reduction of chronic malnutrition, included distribution of a fortified complementary food for women and children in this strategy. Another institution implementing a nutrition program refused to coordinate with them and this strategy, because they, as an institution, argued that food distribution causes dependency and morally did not agree with using this strategy. A few of the consequences of failing to include explicit dialogue and deliberation about values in the decision making for the national strategy were failure to serve the common interest, lack of inter-institutional coordination and collaboration in the national nutrition strategy and even further fragmentation within the nutrition community in the country.

Thomas Dietz emphasizes the need for a competent process in order to allow for the “value learning” that is essential to deal with environmental and other emerging problems grounded in science (Dietz 2003). Bruce Lauber emphasizes the importance of discussion and deliberation as a component of natural resource management decision making (Lauber 1996). Apart from environmental and natural resource management, other policy-making communities, and specifically nutrition communities developing policies for the reduction of chronic malnutrition and food insecurity, could also greatly benefit from such a process. Dialogue and deliberation around individual and institutional values in policy-making processes is one strategy that can be used to arrive at a process of this nature, as will be further discussed in following sections.

All individuals and institutions also have interests. Although some of these may be brought up explicitly in discussion of policy options, special interests are usually underlying each party's preferences and not explicitly addressed or admitted. However, an important part of finding and working towards the common interest, is limiting the predominance of special interests in decision making processes (Clark 2002). Therefore, clarification of where special interests are being sought throughout these processes may often be necessary to refocus individual and institutional attention toward the common interest. A major part of the reason for the predominance of special interests in decision making processes are the power differentials among the discussion participants (Forester 1989). When one participant or party has the power (formally granted or informally assumed) to dominate the discussion in terms of who speaks, who is listened to, whose words are fully considered and whose ideas are included in making final decisions, then that participant's or party's interests are more easily served by resulting policies, without necessarily recognizing or considering the common interest. There are many existing procedural methods that can assist a group in a decision making process to clarify different interests and focus on the common interest, some of which are mentioned in a brief description of practitioner tools in a following section about the elements of a 'good' process.

**Consequences for decision making.** When values are not explicitly addressed and interests are not clarified through dialogue and deliberation around policy issues, the very individual and/or institutional bases for preferences, claims and arguments are either dismissed or ignored. This poses an enormous risk for excluding the values of relevant actors, especially of those who are not included in the discussion around knowledge considered to be "relevant," and allowing special or more powerful interests to predominate in discussions and final decision making, thereby increasing

the risk of making policy decisions that are not in the common interest of those who work and live within the community (Brunner 2002; Clark 2002). Existing policy processes, as described here, often assume that decisions are, or even can be, completely based on scientific evidence. As discussed above, it is clear that scientific evidence does not and cannot tell the whole story. Some authors have argued that normative assumptions and values are just as important as technical analyses (Fischer 2000) and values issues are just as admissible as putatively factual claims in evaluation (Guba and Lincoln 1989). Not only does this erroneous assumption neglect the importance of local, contextual knowledge, but also presumes that goals and principles based on values have been “settled” or are not in contention and places undue power in the hands of those actors who can claim “expertise” in the science relevant to the issues at hand.

Policy decisions made in this way make it difficult to count on buy-in from the necessary actors for carrying out policies and implementing programs, as well as beneficiaries of these programs, likely compromising the effectiveness and sustainability of the policies and programs whose very goal is to improve the lives of those living and working within the community. Differing values and interests are often points of great contention in policy-making processes, however, they continue to be ignored and excluded from dialogue and deliberation (Majone 1989). Explicit discussion of values and clarification of interests among all the actors in the process can lead to both a more clear understanding of values and interests among the actors involved and an increased likelihood that values and interests will be taken into account throughout the process in order to develop policies that best attempt to serve the common interest (Susskind and Cruikshank 1987; Halvorsen 2001; Hunold and Peters 2004).

These difficulties or limitations of typical policy-making processes reflect the need to identify and address underlying knowledge, interpretations, values and interests in order for reconciliation of contention and fuller understanding that enables the design and implementation of policy in the common interest of the whole community. Many authors have shown that this requires open argumentation, discussion and deliberation to mobilize not only tacit knowledge- what we know but cannot readily put into words (Stone 2002), - but also interpretations, values and interests (Majone 1989; Fischer 2000). Although the need for ‘good’ decision making processes in order to achieve this type of open and inclusive dialogue and deliberation has been recognized, policy communities typically lack rules for such a procedure (Majone 1989). Once the need for ‘good’ decision making processes for policy becomes evident, the next question to consider is what makes a ‘good’ decision making process? What rules or guidelines should be followed for a ‘good’ procedure? The following section presents some descriptions from the literature of what elements make for a ‘good’ process for dialogue and deliberation in policy decision making.

### **3. What is a ‘good’ policy decision making process?**

The next step in arguing for the need for a ‘good’ process also requires a definition of what a ‘good’ process is. Defining a ‘good’ decision making process is not a simple task due to the conceptual complexity, unlimited definitions and interpretations of what is meant by ‘good’ (subjectivity) and the abundance of literature addressing important elements of decision making processes. This large quantity of literature on process criteria is from various academic disciplines and areas including action research, education, community development, management, natural resources, planning, policy sciences, political science, political philosophy and public

administration. While this literature looks at processes for a wide range of situations and contexts including decision making, deliberation, dispute resolution, negotiation, public participation and policy-making, all of the literature presented here is relevant to decision making processes within policy communities.

In the abundant literature addressing criteria of a ‘good’ process, these elements are presented as both how processes *should* be judged (based on empirical evidence and theory), and how processes *are* judged by those involved (based on empirical evidence). Webler, Tuler and Krueger (Webler et al. 2001), through using Q methodology to identify how participants characterize a good process, found that process elements valued by public participants were legitimacy, the search for common values, fairness and equality, equal power and responsible leadership. Webler and Tuler (Webler and Tuler 2000) combined existing theory and a case study to build on in developing their theory of fairness and competency in citizen participation. Rowe and Frewer (Rowe and Frewer 2000; Rowe and Frewer 2004) have also made important contributions to the literature on valued process criteria with their development of frameworks for evaluating public participation and have contributed a review of empirical studies that have attempted some form of evaluation of processes with public participation. Ortwin Renn, Thomas Webler and others have also contributed to both theory and testing of criteria for deliberative decision making processes (Renn et al. 1995; Renn 1999; Klinke and Renn 2002). Renn and Webler proposed a normative theory of public participation emphasizing fairness and competence (Renn 1992; Webler 1995) based on theories of Jurgen Habermas’. Much of the literature referred to here draws from Jurgen Habermas’ Critical Theory of Communication (Habermas 1984; Habermas 1987; Habermas 1992), which emphasizes the importance of argument, consensus and cooperation to transcend the

focus on individual interests and focus on reaching the common interest of society, and has shaped much of the thinking and research in this area.

The process elements discussed in this large body of literature were initially compiled into lists, but given the significant overlap of elements discussed in different sources, they were placed into five main categories or principles, which are presented in Table 1. These references listed above were particularly important in compiling this list of criteria of a ‘good’ process and additional references that were drawn from are cited below<sup>7</sup>. There is legitimate uncertainty about the possibility that a process could fulfill all of these criteria. However, the intention is not to create the perfect process to be used in all cases, but rather is to create a literature-based standard that can be looked to for guidance in the development and carrying out of a decision making process with the goal of creating the most appropriate and feasible process in a particular context. The organization of these elements into these categories and sub-categories, and the order they are placed in the table are arbitrary. They were chosen for purposes of organization and to facilitate the presentation of this wide body of literature about process criteria, but not necessarily to imply chronology, importance or any type of hierarchy.

Table 1. Elements of a ‘good’ decision making process categorized into five main principles

<p><b>Involving the “right” people<sup>8</sup></b></p>	<p><b>Request participation from the appropriate people:</b>          -All interested or affected individuals and parties have access to process          -Representative (avoid exclusion; different groups have different value structures &amp; preferences)</p>
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<sup>7</sup> Additional references used in compiling this list (Crosby et al. 1986; Susskind and Cruikshank 1987; Fisher et al. 1991; Innes and Booher 1999; Siu 1999; Wolfe 1999; Chess 2000; IADB 2000; Dietz 2003; Hunold and Peters 2004)

<sup>8</sup>This language was borrowed directly from the National Research Council’s report “Understanding Risk: Informing Decisions in a Democratic Society” (Stern et al. 1996)

Table 1 (Continued)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Foment diversity</li> <li>-Public/civil society involvement, especially important with value judgments</li> <li>-Broad, public involvement as early as possible</li> <li>-Encourage groups or organizations to elect an appropriate representative to participate in the process</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Involving people in the "right" way</b></p>	<p><b>Open dialogue &amp; deliberation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-All participants have the freedom to: put items on the agenda, initiate discourse, express and articulate their ideas, defend their own assertions &amp; challenge others' assertions, listen and be listened to, have their points of view recognized and respected, have sufficient time to learn and to reflect on values &amp; goals, evaluate &amp; refute arguments, ask for more clarity, contribute to &amp; challenge the definition of "common interest", get closure on issues raised in discussion, contribute to the resolution of disagreements, contribute to final decisions</li> </ul> <p><b>Recognize, respect &amp; address all factual and moral/value claims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Enable that all participants share and have access to all types of "information": knowledge, state of affairs, values, moral arguments, beliefs, interests, preferences, rationalities</li> <li>[Sources of these types of "information": leaders/planners, participants, experts, civil society, people with "expert" or technical knowledge, people with lay/"local" knowledge, people with values &amp; interests affected, other groups]</li> <li>-All types of "information" should be gathered, shared and evaluated in appropriate ways</li> <li>-Importance and legitimacy of all points of view and interests are recognized, respected and appreciated</li> <li>-Encourage all participants to listen to all "information" and others' interpretations</li> <li>-For factual claims: promote accuracy of claims and adequate analysis</li> <li>-For moral/value claims: promote explicit discussion of underlying values</li> <li>-Address differences and resolve conflict in both types of claims via democratic process (all parties explain preferences &amp; make arguments, translation of expressions approved by speaker, estimate impact of potential decisions, promote compromises &amp; discovery of mutual understanding)</li> </ul> <p><b>Foment constructive interaction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Respect, honesty, trust</li> <li>-Trust is based on an entire history of personal and institutional interactions, which participants bring to the decision making processes</li> <li>-Trust (among participants and process organizers) is important for process to be considered fair, competent &amp; legitimate</li> <li>-Trust can be built through these same processes that foment fairness, competence and legitimacy in the decision making process</li> </ul>

Table 1 (Continued)

<p><b>Clear, organized objective &amp; procedure</b></p>	<p><b>Issues to address in pre-process planning stage:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Time (consider availability of all participants; allow for sufficient time to make decisions)</li> <li>-Location (availability &amp; participants' ability to access)</li> <li>-Adequate prior notice given to participants</li> <li>-Facilitate constructive interaction (seating arrangements, open set-up, no closed doors, appropriate group sizes, room appropriate for total group size and format)</li> <li>-Estimated total costs covered</li> <li>-Necessary staff available and affordable</li> <li>-Resources available &amp; accessible to all participants (particular attention to disadvantaged groups)</li> <li>-Information documents passed out free of jargon</li> <li>-Human resources available (scientists, witnesses, decision analysts)</li> <li>-Materials available (projectors, whiteboards, paper, etc)</li> </ul> <p><b>Establish norms or ground rules at beginning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Structure: clear process design with reflective learning elements</li> <li>-Constructive interaction (i.e. mutual respectfulness, listening to all "information" and interpretations, open-mindedness, honesty)</li> <li>-Behavior</li> <li>-Use of language</li> <li>-Evaluating evidence</li> <li>-Method by which closure/resolution of agreements will be reached</li> <li>-Anything brought up &amp; agreed to by participants</li> <li>- Set rules at beginning, but be flexible to necessary changes</li> </ul> <p><b>Clarify goals &amp; define tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Clearly define objectives of participation</li> <li>-Clearly define nature and scope of task together as a group (initial substantive issues)</li> <li>-Plan initial agenda together (not pre-set), but balance with flexibility to account for changing needs</li> <li>-Seek acceptance of how outcomes of process will be used and how it might direct policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Process facilitation &amp; management of power dynamics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Balance power between: leaders/planners vs. participants; experts vs. civil society; technical knowledge vs. values/interests, etc.</li> <li>-Process management possibly by: respected professional facilitator (independent, unbiased); process observer (internal &amp; external); appointed process management committee (selected by and among participants)</li> <li>-Roles of facilitator/committee: organize process, promote efficiency, promote balance between timeliness and open dialogue/flexibility, strictly enforce ground rules, balance power dynamics, promote transparency, member checks, help build trust, keep records</li> </ul> <p><b>Iterative &amp; adaptive process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Participants assess whether participation is affecting how problems are defined and understood</li> <li>-Process builds greater understanding of viewpoints &amp; issues (all participants educated about problems, interests and concerns of other participants)</li> </ul>
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Table 1 (Continued)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Balance between meeting agenda goals in time &amp; allowing for flexibility in response to changing needs</li> <li>-Participants assess whether progress is in fact being made</li> <li>-Process is responsive to changing needs of participants throughout the process</li> <li>-Feedback used to make adjustments</li> <li>-Participants speaking for their group (i.e. ethnic group, social organization, etc.) or organization (i.e. WFP, NGO, etc.) are encouraged and allowed the time/space for "checking back" with constituents.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Focus on securing the common interest</b></p>	<p><b>Decisions should be based on "consensus" or popular legitimacy, not majority rules:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use systematic procedures to work towards "consensus" on issues about all types of "information"</li> <li>-"Consensus" is not forced, emerges through process</li> </ul> <p><b>Encourage behavior that is conducive to finding and acting on the common interest:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Decision making focused on different types of "information", not rhetoric or political power</li> <li>-Avoid strategic behavior, elite preferences masked in rhetoric, domination of one party</li> <li>-Use skilled conflict management so political &amp; personal disagreements (special interests) do not overpower the process</li> <li>-Consider potential consequences of each decision &amp; violations of different values and interests</li> <li>-Encourage traditional adversaries to work together</li> <li>-Encourage responsible and collective leadership</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transparency &amp; accountability</b></p>	<p><b>Transparency in how decisions are made and how they are used to inform policy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-All parties have opportunity to: discuss results; review, revise &amp; comment on drafts of documents produced; discuss results of the review/comment process; sign off on final versions of agreements</li> <li>-Transparency in how "information" from different sources is used in decision making</li> <li>-No secrecy: participants can see all that's going on and how decisions are being made</li> <li>-Transparency for others needs to be discussed among participants (i.e. the broader public, media, etc)</li> </ul> <p><b>Accountability in use of decisions to inform policy and to build appropriate future processes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Methods of implementation of final agreements are viable and acceptable to participants</li> <li>-Apparent that process outcomes will have a genuine impact on subsequent policy decisions</li> <li>-Assurance that decisions will be followed through with</li> <li>-Enable an appropriate social process for future decision making processes by: using constructive conflict management, encouraging relationship building, promoting a sense of place in the process, facilitating learning of substantive and procedural issues by all participants, promoting or enabling that a 'good' process is plugged into political and institutional processes</li> </ul>

These five principles of a ‘good’ decision making process that emerged from this literature search are not mutually exclusive categories, but rather are interconnected. Some subcategories could be placed in a different category or under a different principle. For example, although process facilitation was placed under “Clear, organized objective and procedure,” it could be placed under “Involving people the ‘right’ way.” Each of the categories both influence and are influenced by the others. For example, trust is important for a good process and can be built by these very same elements of a good process; and a clear, organized procedure will help to meet goals of timeliness, but also help involve people in the right ways.

It is important to note that although this literature defines a ‘good’ decision making process using terms such as fair, competent, legitimate, etc., evaluation of whether a process meets these criteria also relies on subjective judgments. While this subjectivity further complicates the evaluation of these processes, it also highlights the importance of carefully considering the knowledge, interpretations, values and interests of the process participants, as explained in Part II B above. It is also important to reemphasize that overall, a ‘good’ process is one that is appropriate for securing the common interest. A ‘good’ process should not be confused with one that will produce particular substantive outcomes that serve special interests, but rather substantive outcomes that reflect the group’s best attempt to define and secure the common interest.

In addition to this academic literature concerning what a ‘good’ process is, there is also an enormous body of practitioner literature for carrying out and improving collective decision making processes. One source is *The Change Handbook* (Holman

and Devane 1999), which presents planning, structuring and adaptable process for making changes among organizations or communities. Another source is the National Policy Consensus Center, which has published a source particularly relevant to decision making policy communities called Building Trust (Adler and Birkhoff 2003). This resource intends to help community leaders, business professionals and government representatives use collaborative processes to ‘sustain a disciplined conversation that uses both heart and mind to work out differences of opinion’. Another relevant source is Complex Problems, Negotiated Solutions (Warner 2001), which presents tools for conflict management and negotiation for use by civil society, government, business or the donor community involved in community development processes. There are far too many of these types of resources available to begin to provide a comprehensive list, but these are a few relevant examples.

There have been many efforts to include at least some of these process criteria into decision making processes for public policy in areas such as community development, natural resource management, planning and business management. Although these questions concerning the elements of a good process have been studied in many disciplines, much less attention has been paid to questions concerning process among scientific communities. One of the most notable efforts in the scientific community, which the nutrition community is most closely connected to, was the National Research Council’s call for public participation and deliberation in process design for risk analysis and characterization in policy decision making (Stern et al. 1996). In this 1996 report “Understanding Risk: Informing Decisions in a Democratic Society,” recommendations were made that participation and deliberation be used widely in risk-related policy decision making processes, based on three rationales- normative, substantive and instrumental (Fiorino 1990). The normative rationale is based on the

democratic expectations that the public should be involved in the processes used by government to make decisions that affect them. The substantive rationale is based on the principle that the public has relevant knowledge, values and interests that need to be considered to make realistic and appropriate decisions. The instrumental rationale is based on the principle that inclusion and participation of the public in decision making processes results in a greater trust and acceptance of the final decisions. This 1996 report represents a very important point for the scientific community given that it directly and explicitly shows how the National Academy of Sciences realized and recognized the importance of process, specifically participation and deliberation in decision making.

These rationales are based on key issues observed not only in risk assessment processes, but in policy-making processes in general. In addition, although this report is framed in terms of broad public participation, these same principles can be applied to wider participation within other policy communities, including nutrition policy communities. These normative, substantive and instrumental rationales also support the importance of broadening participation of actors in national nutrition communities in nutrition policy decision making processes. For example, the larger nutrition community should be involved in making decisions about national strategies for the reduction of malnutrition given that their work agendas and plans are greatly affected by such government decisions. Also, the larger nutrition community possesses knowledge, values and interests that are essential for making effective and appropriate decisions, and the inclusion of a broader set of actors in these decision making processes is likely to increase buy-in and support for national nutrition strategies. This expanded application of these rationales is not intended, by any means, to underestimate the importance of public participation, but to show how they apply to

the focus of the present work on the Guatemalan policy-making nutrition community. This does not limit the possibility that this community may find that there is a need for broader or improved public participation in making nutrition policy decisions in Guatemala, just as has been recognized in other nutrition policy communities as well as in Guatemala.

This section presented literature related to what a 'good' process is and reflection upon the importance of such a process. Following is a discussion of the literature related to the fourth research question concerning the acceptance of decisions resulting from a 'good' process and further reflection on the importance of such a process.

#### **4. Acceptance of decisions resulting from a 'good' process**

A few examples were found in the literature from different fields where the same question- whether agreement on the process leads to greater acceptance of resulting decisions- has been directly addressed. The first example is from the field of natural resources management. Thornton Bruce Lauber addressed this question in a case study to explore citizen views of fairness in a decision making process used for moose management in New York (Lauber 1996). Results showed that citizens who held one view were not particularly critical of the final decision supporting the opposite view, showing that they made distinct judgments about the fairness of the final decision and the fairness and overall quality of the process by which the decision was reached. This showed that citizens were not simply judging the process by the degree to which it satisfied their interests. A second example where this research question has been directly addressed is from the field of business administration. Iaquinto and Fredrickson (Iaquinto and Fredrickson 1997) studied 65 firms in order to identify determinants and consequences of top management team agreement about the

comprehensiveness of strategic decision making processes. They found that top management team process agreement positively affects organizational performance, showing that greater agreement on process results in improved organizational performance. They conclude by emphasizing the need for further research to explore the factors that shape such agreement on decision making processes. A third example of where this question has been addressed is from the field of psychology, where feelings of procedural justice led citizens to be more accepting of decision outcomes in their experiences with legal authorities and their job supervisors (Tyler 1994).

Two further examples were found from the health field, which is most closely associated with the nutrition field, where this question was directly addressed. The first example is where Weiner and Alexander (Weiner and Alexander 2002) performed surveys of participants in community-based health promotion coalitions in order to explore the relationship between coalition management processes and indicators of coalition functioning. Findings showed that perceptions of procedural fairness and procedural clarity were positively associated with member satisfaction with coalition decisions, highlighting the importance of process for satisfaction and commitment to coalition decisions. The second example from the health field was focused on health communication, where McComas and others (McComas et al. 2007) examined the degree to which elements of justice influenced public meeting outcome variables including meeting satisfaction and willingness to accept meeting outcomes. Findings showed that aspects of justice, specifically having a voice and positive interactional treatment, influenced participants to accept the outcomes and recommendations resulting from the meeting, supporting their argument that health officials should structure public meetings to ensure that attendees have a voice in addressing the issues at hand.

Several examples in the literature were also found where similar questions about process and the acceptance of outcomes have been investigated. One example is from the field of communications where Katherine McComas (McComas 2001), in a study among environmental and health agency officials who had experience with public meetings, explored how officials describe what makes a successful public meeting and how they describe their satisfaction with public meetings. Findings showed that officials generally equate successful meetings with successful processes and that officials most satisfied with meetings said that they improved relations between the agency and the public, offered insight into decisions, enhanced agency credibility with participants and served the ideals of democratic decision making. Ronald Bruner and colleagues (Brunner 2002; Bruner et al. 2005) have also looked at similar questions regarding the outcomes of processes used in community-based initiatives for the management of natural resources and large mammals in the American West. These results further emphasize the need to explore the importance of ‘good’ process, as viewed by process participants themselves, in arriving at and sustaining commitment to decisions resulting from such processes.

Although there is little empirical evidence showing that participants of a process are more likely to accept resulting decisions if they agree to the process they value as ‘good’ or ‘fair’, there are many examples where this same question has been referred to or assumed by others, but not researched directly. Rowe and Frewer (Rowe and Frewer 2004) comment that it seems likely that agreement on citizen participation processes would make participants more likely to accept decisions made, but they provide no empirical evidence for this statement. Webler and Tuler (Webler and Tuler 2000), in a study to identify discourses about what defines a good process, found that

people have real preferences for public policy making processes that are independent of the expected outcomes or goals of those processes. Although they found outright disagreements among participants about the definition of ‘good’ process, none of their interviewees argued that a ‘good’ process was one that produced their favorite outcome. Based on these findings, they concluded that time should be allocated at the start of a process in order to reach agreement on expected outcomes as well as on process design issues. Burkhalter and others (Burkhalter et al. 2002) support the idea that participants in a deliberation process need to believe that the process itself is appropriate so they can act without consciously questioning what they are doing. Although these do not explicitly state that belief in or acceptance of the process will result in greater acceptance of the decisions, these conclusions supports the need to further explore the value and consequences of process acceptance.

In *Getting to Yes* (Fisher et al. 1991), a book widely read by theorists and practitioners of negotiation, the authors assume that process positively affects acceptance of outcomes. “If they [negotiators] are not involved in the process, they are hardly likely to approve the product. It is that simple...If you want the other side to accept a disagreeable conclusion, it is crucial that you involve them in the process of reaching that conclusion...the feeling of participation in the process is perhaps the single most important factor in determining whether a negotiator accepts a proposal. In a sense, the process *is* the product.” This assumption is based on participation in the negotiation process and does not specify the type of process used, thereby further opening the question of what type of a process would lead participants to accept the resulting decision.

In *Breaking the Impasse* (Susskind and Cruikshank 1987), another book widely read by theorists and practitioners of dispute resolution, the authors state that “public disputes can be resolved more effectively (that is better outcomes are more likely) if the parties voluntarily negotiate an agreement that serves their interests...This brings us to a salient point. Consensual solutions are better- and will be accepted- only if all the stake-holding parties are confident they will get more from a negotiated agreement than they would from a unilateral action...” They also state that before substantive negotiations begin, disputing parties must agree on how they will work together and what exactly they will discuss, emphasizing that in establishing ground rules, there is no one correct set and a new set will have to be developed for each negotiation situation. In the conclusion of the book they claim that “consensual outcomes arrived at in the fashion we have described are likely to be more stable than political compromises achieved through conventional means.” These assumptions, which serve as the basis for the negotiation processes they promote, are based on their strong belief that a ‘good’ process is crucial for the acceptance of decisions resulting from negotiation processes.

Assumptions about the acceptance of decisions with a legitimate process in the literature around democracy in philosophy and political sciences were made by two authors who contributed to *Deliberative Politics: Essays on Democracy and Disagreement* (Macedo and Gutmann 1999). In the essay *Agreement without Theory*, Sunstein stated that “people can often agree on what rules mean even when they agree on very little else” and emphasized that people can decide what to do even when they disagree on how to think. This is an example of how it has been assumed that people can agree on a process even though they disagree on the substantive issues at hand, which would allow for the carrying out of a process where participants agree on the

process a priori, as proposed by many authors referenced here. In the essay *Justice, Inclusion and Deliberative Democracy*, Iris Marion Young states that a policy can be democratically legitimate even if it is thought to be unjust by a large number of people and that a legitimate policy is one that results from public deliberations carried out with principles of reciprocity, accountability and inclusion. Her theory of deliberative democracy supports the idea that not everyone will agree on all the substantive issues involved in a policy decision, but democratic legitimacy can result if the due process is carried out to reach that particular policy decision. The theories and assumptions presented in this section highlight the importance of the present research to explore, in a specific context, what a 'good' process means to actors in a specific policy making community and whether they would be willing to accept the decisions that result from a process they view as 'good'.

These examples from different disciplines show that others have considered questions of acceptance of decisions resulting from a 'good' process; however, it is clear that there are more examples of this as an underlying assumption than as based on case-studies or other empirical evidence. The fact that it is often assumed that people will be more willing to accept the outcomes of a process if they agree to a process and/or feel view the process as 'good', but that this is not addressed in practice emphasizes the need to investigate further into these questions. Many authors have recognized these gaps and called for more research to address these issues in different contexts. This lack of attention to process is particularly clear in the nutrition field where such examples are mostly concerned with process indicators for evaluation of program implementation, but not with the decision making processes involved in making nutrition policy. Nutrition literature on this specific subject is very scarce, if it does exist at all.

## 5. Research questions

Despite some notable efforts, decision making processes in policy communities are often lacking many of the elements presented in Table 1, or appropriate use of them. Mounting evidence that this is also true of nutrition policy communities (Pelletier 2008), and Guatemala in particular (Hill et al. 2008), where genuine efforts have been made to include participatory approaches in developing national strategies, led to the development of the following research questions:

- How do actors in the Guatemalan FNS policy community describe a ‘good’ decision making process?
  - How do they explain the meaning of ‘good’ process principles from the literature in the Guatemalan context?
- What do these actors feel is the importance of a ‘good’ decision making process?
  - What results do they expect from a ‘good’ decision making process?
- Would these actors be willing to participate in a process with these principles from the literature?
- Would these actors be willing to accept the decisions resulting from a decision making process if they have previously agreed to a process that they view as a ‘good’ process?

In this research, Guatemala is used as one example of a national nutrition policy community that is committed to the reduction of chronic malnutrition and improving food security at the national level in order to provide an opportunity for actors in this community to reflect upon what is generally thought of as a ‘good’ process and how they view the importance of a ‘good’ process. This research is particularly important

for the field of nutrition given that nutrition policy processes are generally lacking consideration and application of most of these process criteria as well as discussion about them. This deficit is also reflected in the absence of attention to decision making processes in the nutrition literature, as noted above.

There is a great need and support for the present study to explore these issues of a ‘good’ process among actors in the Guatemalan nutrition policy context. The purpose of this study was to provide an opportunity for these actors to reflect upon their personal perspectives and experiences with decision making in the nutrition policy community and explore how these actors describe what makes a ‘good’ process and the importance and potential or desired consequences of such a process. It is intended that reflection of participants’ viewpoints back to the entire group of participants, will initiate conversation about the need for such a process and the viability of carrying out a formal decision making process in order to improve actions around the national strategies for the reduction of chronic malnutrition and food insecurity in Guatemala. This type of research can help us, both as ‘outsider’ researchers and as ‘insider’ participants, to understand what process behavior is socially appropriate and relevant to this specific context in order to support achievement of these national goals.

### **III. Methods**

The present research was designed based on an initial exploratory study to gain an understanding of the nutrition policy-making community and current issues of commitment building and decision making processes within this community. This initial study consisted of 50 face-to-face interviews, which were carried out in Guatemala City during June 2007, as well as field site visits and review of relevant documents such as press releases, meeting notes, surveys, project documents and presentations relevant to nutrition and food security issues. This study was a case study with the flexibility of an emergent design, adapting the inquiry to the themes that emerged throughout the data collection process. A draft report of findings and resulting process-related suggestions was sent to all 50 actors in the nutrition and food security community who were interviewed during this initial exploratory phase, asking for comments and suggestions for changes (November 2007). These comments and suggestions were incorporated into the final draft, which was then sent to all fifty actors initially interviewed (June 2008).

The present research is a case study of the FNS policy community in Guatemala, which was based on the learning from this initial exploratory research. The aim of the present research was to understand 1) how actors in this community describe a ‘good’ decision making process in this context, 2) what these actors feel is the importance of a ‘good’ decision making process, 3) whether and why not these actors would be willing to participate in a ‘good’ decision making process, and 4) whether and why these actors would or would not be willing to accept the decisions resulting from a decision making process that they view as a ‘good’ process.

The case study has been a common research strategy in psychology, sociology, political science, social work, business, economics and community planning in order to understand complex social phenomena. Although often criticized for lack of rigor and a limited basis for scientific generalization, the term “naturalistic generalization” has been used (Stake 1995) to refer to the engagement- and experience-based generalizations that are made from a single case study that add to the knowledge and understanding from other cases. The case study methodology has been increasingly used as a research tool for exploring questions of “how” or “why” about current events in a given context without manipulating relevant behaviors (Yin 2003). The case study method is appropriate for exploring the present research questions given that the purpose was to interact with participants, through semi-structured interviews, in order to explore their explanations of these process-related issues as they pertain specifically to their professional and socio-cultural context.

This qualitative research took place in a natural setting where the researcher interacted with the participants through semi-structure interviews with open-ended questions, which were developed to gather participants’ perceptions and accounts of their personal experiences. It was emergent in design, acknowledging and adjusting for the realities of the context throughout the study, and our analyses incorporate our introspection and reflexivity as we acknowledge our biases as researchers, or ‘outsiders’, in this context.

### **Data Collection**

Purposive snowball sampling (Creswell 2003; Lofland et al. 2006) was used for the initial exploratory interviews in order to identify actors involved in the Guatemalan FNS policy community. The sampling was done by asking two key informants and

subsequent interviewees for names of individuals working on and towards national nutrition goals. A point of saturation was reached, as all names mentioned thereafter had previously been mentioned by a key informant or other interviewee. Figure 1 (see page 16) presents a diagram of the National Food and Nutrition Security System (SINASAN) created under the law. This legal structure, with the addition of academic institutions, also shows the institutions to which interview participants belong. All interview participants are part of the FNS policy community. Table 2 presents a timeline of research activities and main policy events in Guatemala during this research period.

Table 2. Timeline of main policy events and research activities in Guatemala.

<b>Years:</b>	<b>2004 - 2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Policy Events in :</b>	<p>President Oscar Berger inaugurated (2004)</p> <p>FNS Policy established (2004)</p> <p>National FNS System (SINASAN) created by law (Decree #32-2005) (2005)</p> <p>PRDC &amp; CB programs initiated (2005)</p>	<p>Presidential Election Campaign year in Guatemala</p> <p>Change in Secretary of FNS and other SESAN staff</p>	<p>President Alvaro Colom inaugurated</p> <p>Changes in staff in many govt. &amp; non-govt. institutions</p> <p>CB program discontinued</p> <p>PRDC program name changed to ENRDC 'National Strategy'</p>
<b>Research Activities:</b>		<p>Exploratory Research Phase:</p> <p>50 interviews (June)</p> <p>Analysis of interviews &amp; report writing (June-Oct)</p> <p>Final report sent to all interviewees (Nov)</p>	<p>Follow-up Research Phase:</p> <p>20 interviews (March - June)</p> <p>Member checking, interview analysis and report writing (June - Aug)</p>

The follow-up interviews for the present case study were requested from the same participants of the exploratory research phase interviews. Emails requesting participation in a follow-up interview about decision making processes in the FNS policy community and process-related suggestions made in the draft report were sent to all 50 actors interviewed in the exploratory phase. Up to two follow-up emails were sent and two successful telephone calls (human or message machine reached) were made in an effort to contact participants. 44 actors responded to email and phone call requests (6 did not respond), but 24 were not interviewed. 7 were unavailable due to new professional positions, 10 had scheduling conflicts and 7 were chosen to be interviewed for a parallel study by the same researchers instead of the current research due to their specific knowledge of the other research topic and the fact that scheduling did not allow for their participation in two interviews. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were carried out with 20 of the 50 actors (12 via telephone and 8 face-to-face). 10 of these participants were from government institutions, 4 from non-government institutions, 3 from international institutions and 3 from academic institutions. None of the actors directly refused to participate in the follow-up interview; however we have no knowledge of why these six actors did not respond to emails or phone calls requesting their participation. The researchers' knowledge of the context in which these actors work leads to the assumption that most of the non-response and non-participation is due to these actors' tight schedules, lack of available time and the change of government administration that led to many changing positions during this research period. There is no apparent reason to believe that the non-responders were less interested in these issues than those who did respond, although this remains a possibility.

Face-to-face interviews were held in participants' offices (5 interviews) or quiet cafes (3 interviews) in Guatemala City. Participants who were not interviewed during the interviewers visit to Guatemala were interviewed by telephone (12 interviews). The interviewer's previous experience interviewing these participants during the exploratory phase and maintaining email contact throughout the follow-up phase allowed her to build rapport with them and gain entry into this policy community to study decision making processes. The interviewer had previously established professional and friendly relationships with all of the participants. This allowed for safe, comfortable interview environments (as felt by the interviewer) for both face-to-face and telephone interviews, which is believed to have facilitated candid responses from participants during the interviews.

The semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions was developed in order to provide sufficient structure to ensure collection of information desired by the researcher, while remaining flexible enough to allow for participants to share information they deem relevant to the topics at hand. The interview guide is presented in Appendix 1. The set of questions in section A was designed to allow participants to verbally share reactions and comments about the draft report that was sent to them electronically. The following questions (B1-3) address general decision making processes in the NFS community in Guatemala and were included in order to provoke participants' explanations and interpretations of both existing and ideal decision making processes within this context. These questions were also intended to orient the participants to the topic of decision making processes and allow them to begin to reflect on their personal experiences and perceptions before beginning to talk about "process", which can be conceptually difficult to discuss concretely. Then, to initiate the discussion about ideal decision making processes, participants were presented with

the interview tool presented in Figure 2. This tool was created by the principal researcher based on the elements of a ‘good’ decision making process presented in Table 1 (in Background and Literature Review section B3) with the purpose of presenting all of these ideas in a concise, reader-friendly probe to help interview participants engage in thinking about “process” and reflect on what investigators propose as a ‘good’ decision making process. The “desired results” is a list of proposed desired outcomes to strive for in a process guided by these principles, which are based on both theory and experience (refer to references concerning outcomes and evaluation of ‘good’ processes presented in Background and Literature Review section B3). The “example actions” column presents examples of actions that can be taken in effort to establish each of these principles in a process, which are also based on theory and experience (refer to references of practitioner literature for carrying out and improving collective decision making processes also in Background and Literature Review section B3). As arrows in the figure indicate, there are many actions (only a few examples are presented in this figure) that can be taken in light of each of these overall principles in order to reach desired outcomes; however, one process element is not necessarily related to one outcome in a causal fashion, but rather carrying out a process with these elements all together can lead to main process outcomes.

The subsequent questions (B4-6) were designed to allow for participants reflection and comments about the desired results and principles of a ‘good’ decision making process presented in the tool. After presentation of the desired results in the tool, participants were asked to reflect on the four desired results and give their overall impression of them (question B4). Then participants were asked what elements a process should have in order to achieve these desired results (question B5). The order of questions B5 and B6 was carefully chosen in order to allow participants to share their ideas about

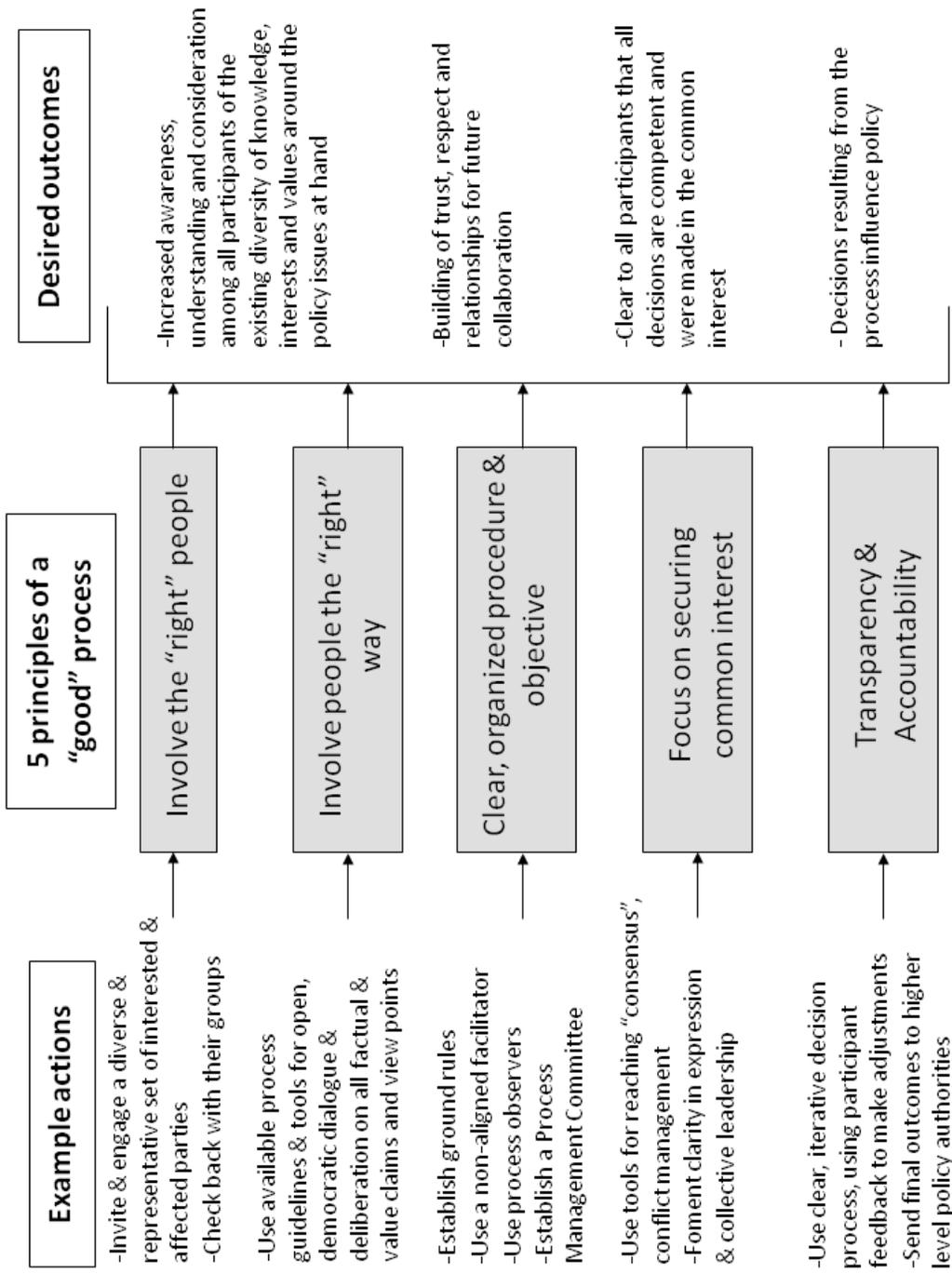


Figure 2. Five principles of a 'good' process, example actions and desired results

elements of a 'good' process prior to exposing them to this piece of the researcher's model. After presentation of the principles, the participants were asked to reflect on each of the principles individually by explaining what each means to them in the Guatemalan FNS policy decision making context (question 6). Then they were asked to explain whether they felt that these are five principles of a good decision making process, why or why not, and what additions, eliminations or changes they would make to these (question 6B).

The purpose of presenting this tool to participants was not to be able to end up with conclusions for recommending one particular process model, but rather to explore and discover contextual factors that are important to understand what type of a process model fits the Guatemala nutrition policy context. In the interviews we were interested in whether these five categories of process elements have resonance with these actors in this policy community in Guatemala, which of these elements seem particularly important or salient to them and why. We wanted to understand how these actors view decision making in their culture and whether they put emphasis on different parts of this model, which was developed based on theory and experience from a variety of disciplines.

The next set of process-related questions (C1-3) were developed in order to explore whether (and why) these actors would or would not be willing to participate in a process with the elements that were discussed during the interview, whether (and why) they felt that the other actors would be willing to participate in this type of a process and whether (and why) they think that a process like this would be possible in this context in Guatemala. The final process-related questions (C4-5) were intended to understand how these actors explain whether (and why) they themselves, and the other

actors, would be willing to accept the decisions resulting from a process that each view as a ‘good’ process.

The final set of questions in section D was designed to allow the participants to ask any questions they might have for the researcher, allow them to provide any additional comments or suggestions they might have for the researcher, to request their participation in the member check process, and to thank them for their participation in the interview and for their support to the researcher’s efforts over the past year.

Each of the interviews lasted between 45-80 minutes. All of the interviews were carried out in the Spanish language. The interviewer is fully fluent in both Spanish and English. The interview guide presented in Appendix 1 was translated into English by the interviewer.

Verbal consent to record the interviews for the purpose of transcription and to participate in member checking was asked of each interviewee before the interview began and the audio recorder was turned on. Participants were assured that their identities would remain confidential and that any identifying information and recordings would be available only to the core research team (Renée Hill and David Pelletier). All participants provided verbal consent for the interview to be recorded and agreed to comply with the member checking process. Audio and transcription files were coded by the interviewer in order to further ensure confidentiality of all data and anonymity of participants. This research was submitted to Cornell's IRB for approval and was exempted on the grounds that interview respondents were participating in their official capacities and not being asked to share personal information.

### **Data recording, transcription & validation**

In addition to audio recordings, interview notes were taken during each of the interviews. Reflection notes taken after each of the interviews, as suggested by Weiss (Weiss 1994) are indicated in the interview guide (Appendix 1). Audio recordings of interviews were transcribed (in Spanish) for 19 of the 20 interviews (one audio file was corrupted and eliminated); notes taken by the researcher during this interview without a full transcript were included in the analysis. A total of 250 double-spaced pages (12.5 pages per interview on average) of qualitative data were generated during the period from March-June 2008. As a means of validating findings a member-checking process was used (Creswell 2003), in which interview transcripts were sent via email to the participants in order to allow them to make changes and to ask for their acceptance of its use in the present study. They were notified that a non-response to the email within two weeks would be considered as acceptance of the transcript for its use in the study. Seven participants responded to the member check email, four of which provided revisions consisting of grammatical and wording corrections. All seven approved the use of their transcripts for the study.

### **Data analysis**

Data analysis was carried out in an ongoing process of continual reflection about the data throughout the collection and analysis phases, as suggested in *Qualitative Data Analysis* (Miles and Huberman 1994). Transcripts were read thoroughly several times by the interviewer and reflected upon throughout the collection and analysis phases. Throughout this phase the text was coded using MS Word and Excel programs. Each interview section (general process quality, process importance, desired results, process elements and decision acceptance) was read and coded with both descriptive and interpretive codes. A list of codes was made throughout the coding process (see

Appendix 2) and then all interview texts for each section were re-read several times and further coded in light of the entire code list for that section (Miles and Huberman 1984). Continual comparisons of codes were made to look for emergent themes throughout the text. Illustrative quotes were sorted into categories of common themes and novel quotes were used to identify emergent themes as well. Throughout this process, continual comparisons were made to look for where codes could be combined into themes in order to explain the findings that emerged from the data regarding each interview section (Miles and Huberman 1984; Strauss and Corbin 1990). Emergent themes were not identified in the interview section on decision acceptance, but rather yes/no answers and stated reasons why were recorded. It is important to note that, given the nature of this approach to qualitative research, analysis of these interviews is inescapably influenced by the researcher's interpretations of the data (Creswell 2003). This issue is further addressed in the discussion section. The coding and analysis processes were completed in the Spanish language and only text excerpts from the interviews included in the tables presented were translated into English by the same interviewer who is fully fluent in both the Spanish and English languages.

## IV. Results and Interpretation

The main results from this study and interpretations are presented here. However, due to the large quantity of results, additional results not presented in this section as well as extended versions of tables that are presented here can be accessed in Appendix 3.

**What do these actors feel is the importance of ‘good’ decision making process?**

**What results do they expect from a ‘good’ decision making process?**

### Reactions to desired results

Table 3 presents participants’ overall reactions to the desired results in the tool by indicating emergent themes and quotes from the interview texts. These comments were prompted by section B question 4 of the interview guide (What do you think about these desired results overall? Are there any that you would like to add, remove or change? Why? Which are the most important?).

Table 3. Overall reactions & suggested additions, deletion or changes to all four desired results

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
Add respect for collective decisions as a principle	Here I would put respect as a result...something like democratic decision making respected by the group. Something to say that the decisions are accepted as collective decisions made by the group and this is recognized, and that the fact that the decisions were made by the group is respected...define the mechanisms for group decision making...I would put respect the decisions made by the group...First it's hard make a decision, and second when a decision is made, everyone walk out and complains.

Table 3 (Continued)

<p>Results need more precision</p> <p>Need indicators to measure these results</p> <p>Clear process, consensus</p> <p>Ownership of process</p>	<p>I think that they need to be specified more because I feel like they are very ideal...remember that the central nature of public policy is basically interests...Understanding and participation alone don't help much. On the other hand if we were talking about a result like a shared agenda that is agreed upon by consensus among the actors, I would say yes, this is a result because it says that there are in agreement, that they do have understanding. I think that in the wording this needs to more specified because I think as it is, it is difficult to provide indicators because these are very subjective things I would say...It should be measurable. How do I measure awareness, or understanding or trust?</p> <p>Maybe one thing that could be added is that the process is very clear, that everyone agrees. Also that it is internalized and they take ownership of it, that they promote it. One participates, considers it as their own...the truth is that it seems to me that these are results of a process so that it is successful. This is missing here, we would benefit a lot form these results. I think that this is what is needed.</p>
<p><b>Emergent themes from overall reactions</b></p>	<p><b>Quotes from interviews</b></p>
<p>Community authorities involved</p> <p>Make results known &amp; build awareness</p> <p>Common objective</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Trust</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Respect</p> <p>Interests</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <p>Process facilitator</p>	<p>Yes, it looks good to me, but I would just add that the local authorities at community level are involved.</p> <p>Of course. Definitely. I would add make the conclusions that were arrived at known among the same participants and among the public, since the goal is involvement and building awareness of the people who have participated to share their opinions.</p> <p>I think that these are necessary, but maybe not sufficient. Because focus on a common objective is very important... Communication is a strong trap for decision making. Bridges must be built, not necessarily bridges in the same issues. There is a need to know other areas. Trust is necessary. Just because two people both work in FNS it doesn't mean that they will work well together. And this is because in FNS there has been little progress. Leadership is a facilitator of communication.</p> <p>It looks good to me. For me the most important are...get to know each other and respect differences...and I think that this word ['interests'] is key. The different actors have different interests...You cannot make decisions for the country that are going to benefit you directly.</p> <p>They seem pretty well placed to me. To these four I would add the responsibility of all the actors, of all the sectors.</p> <p>A leader, someone who is more a facilitator...it has to be an internal person...who does this is SESAN, by law SESAN coordinates. SESAN does not implement. The role of SESAN is to be an internal facilitator.</p>

The themes that emerged from these discussions are closely related to the 5 principles, which were presented to participants after the desired results. All participants agreed that these desired results, as a whole, are results that they would hope for or expect from a 'good' decision making process. No disagreement about these results as a whole was expressed. One suggestion was to make these results more concrete or specifically applicable to the FNS policy context rather than the context of any decision making process. This participant also commented on the difficulty with measuring subjective concepts and mentioned the need to frame these results in terms of measurable indicators.

Tables 13-16 in Appendix 3 present participants' comments on each of the four desired results individually and emergent themes; these results are summarized here. These responses were also prompted by section B question 4 of the interview guide concerning their opinions about these desired results overall; although participants were not asked to comment on each result separately, they did comment on specific results.

Most of the comments on individual results were regarding participants' agreement with a particular result as important to achieve, or participants' expression of the fact that a particular results is needed in this context in Guatemala. Three participants mentioned that the first result (increased awareness, understanding and consideration among all participants of the existing diversity of knowledge, interests and values around the policy issues at hand) already exists in this context and that it naturally occurs as a result of process in FNS in Guatemala. There was one point of direct disagreement, which was regarding the second desired result (building of trust, respect and relationships for future collaboration). One participant commented that this result

was impossible to achieve in the context of CONASAN, where ministers and civil society are involved together, and that it should not be expected in this context. Although this was the only point of direct disagreement with these desired results, many changes and additions were suggested. Most of these suggestions were related to improvements that could be made to the wording or framing to make certain aspects more explicit, but some conceptual additions or improvements were suggested.

One such suggested improvement is the addition of “working as a group or team,” as an outcome that would come from achieving these four desired results. Although this concept was considered by the investigators to be implicitly included in the tool as part of the second result (building of trust, respect and relationships for future collaboration), this addition shows that this participant was thinking further along in the process beyond these four process results. Apart from the one comment expressing disagreement with the second desired result, no suggestions for deletions of any of these results, or any parts of them, were made.

Another suggestion for an addition to these desired results was regarding the third result (clear to all participants that all decisions are competent and were made in the common interest). One participant suggested that acceptance of the final decisions be added as a desired result because they are collective decisions made by the group. It is important to note that this response was provided before the questions concerning acceptance of decisions were introduced by the interviewer. This is an interesting result, which shows that some participants hold this idea as an underlying assumption of a ‘good’ process. This issue will be further addressed below with the results of this research question concerning the acceptance of decisions resulting from a ‘good’ process and in the discussion.

Two of the suggested changes for the fourth result (decisions resulting from the process influence policy) brought up the importance of the existence of budgets to back up resulting decisions and having a documentation of the process that is provided to the participants, both of which were not explicitly included in the tool. Prior to their exposure to the tool, participants' reactions to the desired results included the same elements of a 'good' process as in the interview tool, thereby showing that these actors' perceptions of a 'good' decision making process in this context are comparable to literature-based process elements presented in this tool.

### **The importance of a 'good' process**

Table 4 presents emergent themes from participants' comments about the importance of a 'good' decision making process during the beginning of the interviews (section B, questions 1-3), prior to their exposure to the interview tool. Due to the flexible nature of the interviews, this question was directly asked to six participants. Some participants felt that the importance of a 'good' process was in order to truly achieve objectives. Some participants commented on the fact that it would allow for meeting community needs and there were references to the definition of roles and responsibilities for inter-institutional coordination. All of these responses bring up aspects that are included, either explicitly or implicitly in the five principles of a 'good' process, to which these participants had not yet been exposed upon making these comments. That their unprompted perceptions of what elements make a 'good' process (before exposure to the tool) incorporate the same elements as those included in the tool is an interesting point that emphasizes the overall agreement with these principles as a 'good' process.

Table 4. Why is a ‘good’ process important?

Emergent themes	Quotes from interviews
Achieve objectives	<p>That actions are truly carried out...achieve what is planned. If not, I think we will never get to implementation. All of the levels are important, but the central level is more political, more strategic. The action would be at the local level. There has to really be an impact. Without action, nothing is achieved, even though at the political level decisions have been made and plans established. It's about trying to link the action and the implementation to everything else.</p>
Meet community needs	<p>Because people at the community level know the problems. In order to see that the decisions made are going to support the community. If everything stays at the higher level, people might not support these decisions, because they don't really address the needs of the community. But rather they are what those in charge think are their needs, but they are not connected with what happens at the community level.</p> <p>The final goal is to reduce food insecurity. This is the overall goal of the process. Institutions are a great support, but decision making has to be primarily focused on the beneficiaries of food security programs and projects...Because in the end decisions are made in order to benefit or ignore the families who are affected by hunger. It is also important that we are focused in our decision making...we have to make decisions that allow us to focus on the social groups who are most affected.</p>
Define roles and responsibilities for inter-institutional coordination	<p>Awareness is needed, that the decisions are government policy. And advocacy of roles, how each one of us contributes.</p> <p>There hasn't been a good administration of these processes. It began with the law, but roles have not been defined, who is going to lead this process. Everyone wants to do their own thing, and in the end we do nothing. And this is why nothing works, that everything is short-term focused. And everything remains unfinished after four years. There is no consistency in these processes.</p> <p>There is a lot of malnutrition and poverty in Guatemala. If these processes had continuity, and if we achieved what is written in the law, we could move forward. Everything that was achieved in the past four years, now we repeat it again. Because there is no clear direction, who leads these processes. SESAN exists, but they don't do well because their function is diluted in the ministry of health and the secretariat of social work. There is nobody to coordinate, to advise, to drive these processes.</p>

The responses and emergent themes in Table 4 can be compared to those in Table 5, which presents the responses to a very similar question asked after the participants

were exposed to the tool. After discussion about the tool, twelve participants were asked to comment on the importance of participating in a process with these elements, not just any process. This question was designed to allow participants to reflect again on the results they would expect from a process similar to the one discussed and on the reasons why they would be willing to participate in a process like this.

Table 5. What is the importance of participating in a ‘good’ process with these elements, not just any process?

<b>Emergent themes</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
Involve actors and improve representation	Involve the right people the right way, and transparency and accountability are the most important. I think that if this is not achieved, the process is not necessarily representative. If you achieve these things then you assure that the process is representative, of your sector, your area or field.
Build leadership	The importance of all of this is developing leadership and focusing on leadership so that all of this can move forward. With these principles, we would achieve the objectives.
Create dialogue	Basically it is for... if one sees the multiculturalism of our problem, while there is no dialogue we cannot improve the situation. With dialogue alone it is not going to improve, but without dialogue we cannot do anything.
Make valuable contributions	I would like to contribute to these processes, in the actions, the operational part. I would like to be a part of, and not just an observer. I think that it is worth it because a lot of time has passed and we still have not resolved these problems.  The motivation comes from making a positive contribution to the problem of food insecurity.  Because I would be sure that my efforts and my contributions are going to have an impact, and that it is not just a tiring and frustrating process....we often end up frustrated because we do not manage to overcome the challenges and results are not visible anywhere, so...to find something that really allows us to see that what we do is really going to be good for the country.
Reach consensus	Basically because it would mean organizing the process and strengthening the ability to reach consensus for actions. I think that this would be interesting.
Build trust	In order to deliver and truly work towards the reduction of food insecurity in Guatemala in all the communities, this requires a certain type of trust. Without trust people do not consider working together.
Improve coordination	To achieve coordination, and not duplicate efforts. Not only because of the economic inefficiency, but also because if there are different initiatives carried out, they eliminate each other.

Table 5 (Continued)

Achieve objectives	<p>Because I think that there are a lot of people that have not been able to find a good way to do things...And these processes have to have charm. If you are a professor, your intentions are not to hurt the students.</p> <p>So that it really leads to something.</p> <p>It is noticeable how things are not achieved and that we need to achieve them. I am sure that there is still a lot to do.</p> <p>So we end up with sustainable interventions that serve the populations needs.</p>
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One of the emergent themes- achieve objectives- also emerged from responses to the questions concerning the importance of a ‘good’ process that was asked prior to exposure to the tool. One response referred to leadership, an aspect that was not explicit in the tool, but received much attention from participants in conversations about the principles of a ‘good’ process, as is shown below. All of the other themes were related to the five principles and four desired results of a ‘good’ process presented in the tool, showing that they were reflected on the tool and our discussion about them elements a ‘good’ process in considering the importance of such a process.

**How do actors in the Guatemalan nutrition policy community describe a ‘good’ decision making process? How do they explain the meaning of literature-based process principles in the Guatemalan context?**

**Unprompted suggestions for ‘good’ process**

Table 6 presents the responses and emergent themes from the question “What elements are needed in process in order to achieve these results?” (section B, question 5 in interview guide) which was asked after the discussion about the desired results in the tool, but prior to introduction of the five elements of a ‘good’ process. Therefore,

the emergent themes from these responses reflect participants' untainted ideas about what makes a 'good' process.

Table 6. What process elements are needed to achieve these results?

<b>Emergent themes</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
Participation, dialogue and clear rules for decision-making	<p>It has to be very participatory, with a lot of dialogue, coordination among all of the actors.</p> <p>...a good participation in the dialogue. Many times we leave participants to one side because we leave the participation to those who have the most complaints. We don't give this space to the rest of the population.</p> <p>...help people express themselves, transform their expressions into institutional documents. The people in the rural areas have excellent ideas and they need to be transformed into institutional language. There should always be someone with technical training to help them, if not, it doesn't happen.</p> <p>Clear rules, build trust with clear rules. The truth as a principle that generates trust.</p>
Participants with knowledge & decision-making power	<p>There has to be a good understanding of the mission for those who are going to be involved in the process, in order to see whether or not they fit in the process, if they belong there or not.</p> <p>Speaking of the people that participate...they should be those with the capacity to decide, to have an opinion. It is common that someone says 'I am only representing so-and-so' but I can't speak for that person, I can't share my opinion. They come more as observers to go back and report what happened, but this is set back. It takes a lot of time. This is something that needs to be established.</p>
Clear, shared objectives	<p>It's about clearly understanding the objectives of each person to try to work together.</p> <p>The purpose, goals, expected objectives, results that we want to reach have to be clear.</p> <p>It should come from the national agenda...The problem is that we always start over again, once again from zero, and we invent everything all over again, and we already have this going, we already have this on the agenda. There are so many shared agendas everywhere, but why don't you take the national agenda to orient the actions.</p>

Table 6 (Continued)

<p>Clear procedure, provision of information &amp; planning prior to process</p>	<p>Establish principles, procedures and times. These three things are fundamental. If we do not have principles, procedures and times, it turns into an eternal debate and we don't ever finish.</p> <p>First there has to be good planning, before the process.</p> <p>Beforehand it needs be known what has been done on the area that I am working in. This is part of the prior analysis. Sometimes it is so long, they spend a lot of time preparing the materials and nothing comes of it.</p> <p>Expect and rely on information. More must be knows about what is going to be discussed in the process.</p>
<p>Leadership &amp; credibility to build trust</p>	<p>Definitely whoever convenes the actors should have leadership and credibility. And that everyone trusts them. For me this is very important.</p> <p>Good leadership, someone who has clarity on the subject at hand and how the State works and the other institutions too that don't necessarily have to do with the government...Once the head has this clarity, communication can be organized and the other weak aspects improved.</p>
<p>Documentation and Sustainability of process</p>	<p>It should not be a government activity. This is the problem with this and other issues in Guatemala. When the next government comes along, what is part of the past government is not supported and new activities are considered without taking into account what things from the past government can be used. This has to be a national initiative, so we do not go backwards every time we change governments every four years.</p> <p>But the other part of the systematization, which is where we often fall short, I think that this part has to be that one is documenting, and there could be a written report afterwards that can be revisited later to see how we are doing.</p>

All of the responses were related to the five principles of the tool. Although any one particular participant did not refer to all of the elements in the tool, when all the responses are looked at collectively, all of the elements in the tool were mentioned. There were a few responses that indicated process elements that are not included or explicitly mentioned in the tool. One participant referred to the need for documentation of the process in order to share and refer back to later, which was not included in the tool. There was also one reference to the idea of shared agendas, an

element that was incorporated into the development of the tool, but not made explicit as an element. The idea of shared agendas is similar to the ideas of clear objectives and working towards identifying and serving the common interest, but not entirely the same as these ideas expressed in the tool.

Some of these responses indicated not only general elements of a process, but specific details about a general element, which would be expected given that these responses were not prompted by the elements in the tool. For example, instead of indicating that the “right” people should be involved in the process, participants indicated the specific characteristics of those who should be involved in decision-making processes in this context, such as people with decision making power and credibility. Prior to their exposure to the tool, participants’ explanations of necessary process elements to achieve these desired results included the same process principles as in the interview tool, thereby showing that collectively these actors’ perceptions of a ‘good’ decision making process in this context are comparable to literature-based process elements presented in this tool. It is important to point out that due to the methodology of some of the telephone interviews, half of the responses to what elements would a process need to have in order to achieve the desired results in the tool could possibly have been tainted by wandering eyes around the tool. However, in ten of the interviews the principles part of the tool was still covered until after this question was answered.

### **Reactions to literature-based principles for ‘good’ process**

Table 7 presents the overall reactions to the process element section of the tool (responses to section B question 6B of the interview guide).

The top half of this table indicates where participants' expressed agreement with these as principles of a 'good' process and need for these elements in this context or where participants expressed disagreement with or lack of need for these elements in this context. There were many comments that indicated agreement with these elements as a whole. There was one comment that indicated possible disagreement, which was more of a call for caution with the use of a set of process elements that guides or expects certain behavior. There were no comments that indicated overall disagreement with this set of principles as that of a 'good' decision making process.

Table 7. Overall reactions & suggested changes to the five principles of a 'good' process

<b>Quotes from interviews indicating...</b>	
<b>Agreement with and expressed need for these principles:</b>	<b>Disagreement with or expressed lack of need for these principles</b>
<p>In a few words you have it...I think that the rest, if there were anything else, would be in form not in substance. Probably there are other little things, but there most essential parts are here in my opinion.</p> <p>I agree that these are principles applicable not only to nutrition, but really are principles that have to be considered elsewhere...I think so. I think that all of these fit with a good decision making process.</p> <p>It looks good to me. ..These five principles as the fundamental principles, it's as if one were missing, it wouldn't work.</p> <p>I think that you touched on the most important points. I don't think I can add anything else because you were very precise and this is what we want to achieve. It looks good to me.</p>	<p>It must be understood that Guatemala is a society that has a diversity of cultures and ethnic groups that have their own forms of organizing themselves...We need to be very respectful of these forms and not impose our own forms.</p>
<b>Suggested additions, deletions or changes</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews indicating these</b>
<p>Make more specific to the SAN context; too general &amp; abstract</p>	<p>I do think that it is very general, it is not focused specifically on FNS...It looks really good to me in terms of some things, but it does not related specifically to FNS. This applies to many processes and it would be good to ground it more in the FNS context.</p>

Table 7 (Continued)

	<p>Very general. Very abstract for my way of seeing things. I think about what come before and after this. Before there needs to be leadership. And after there needs to be thought about where these decisions are going, a systematization.</p>
<p>Add/emphasize follow-up on actions, evaluation and financial resources</p>	<p>The most important that I see is transparency and resources management. I would just add a sixth principle that would be evaluation and follow-up of the actions that result from this. Periodically evaluate the actions that were proposed.</p> <p>Another important thing is that there is a budget. Many times we don't do anything because there is no money. The policy has to be implemented with a budget so that things will work.</p> <p>Politics is a science, but it is also an art, right. And the art of politics is to convert each agreement into concrete results, but the problem with Latin-Americans is that we make great theoretical designs, but we never establish the how, the when or the who. We always agree on the what, what we are going to do and we write documents...But things are never implemented, they remain in documents... a balance has to be found to so we don't fall into a focus that is too simplistic, but we also don't wait until we have the perfect design to start acting.</p>
<p>Add respect among participants</p>	<p>Maybe I would add respect as a principle. Respect the spaces where each of the members has participated. That the fact that something is from civil society does not mean that it is of greater or less importance...It's about spaces more than people.</p>
<p>Transparency as a transversal element</p>	<p>This [transparency and accountability] should be something transversal. Because public policy is never linear, it is never going to be a process where everyone is going to be there because they like it, because they want to collaborate, because they have trust, no, it is a great struggle with interests at stake. So you cannot think of it as something linear...Public policy is not something that one can organize how they wish...One can have the actions clear, well-thought out, but if the actors do not agree, everything falls apart.</p>
<p>Win-win; everyone feels they are winning/gaining</p>	<p>There is something else...that everyone involved are winning...It's about win-win. In negotiation one can win and the other can lose. One has to have more weight or more power, that everyone is valuable. A good process would be where all of the actors have the sensation that they are winning.</p>

The bottom half of this table indicates where participants made suggestions for additions, deletions or changes to these principles. Two participants referred to the need to make these principles less general and more specific to the FNS context in Guatemala. Many participants referred to the need to emphasize follow-up on actions

in these principles, indicating specific aspects of follow-up such as commitment, evaluation, and designated financial resources. Another suggestion was to show transparency as a transversal element instead of a separate principle. This comment was interesting given that in the creation of the tool, it was intended that these principles are not mutually exclusive, but rather overlap and are inter-related. Other suggested changes were related to respect among participants and creating a win-win situation. These actors' comments in the tool-based discussion about the principles of a 'good' process support that this tool as a whole resonates with these actors.

In addition to overall reactions to these principles, participants' were also asked to describe what each of the five principles of a 'good' process means in this context in Guatemala. Quotes from the interviews and the emergent themes are presented in Tables 21-25 in Appendix 3, but are summarized here. The emergent themes show what these elements mean to these actors in this context. Some of these responses reflect their perspectives related to the FNS policy community context in Guatemala and others reflect their perspectives related to policy communities in general in Guatemala; it is not always explicitly clear whether a particular response is related specifically to the FNS policy community.

**Principle 1: Involve the 'Right' People.** Comments about this principle (Table 21, Appendix 3) show what types of people these actors feel should be involved in a 'good' decision making process in the FNS policy community. The themes reveal an emphasis on the need for many actors from multiple sectors and disciplines and that those involved represent the population. There were also many comments indicating that process participants should have knowledge about, experience with and interest in the issues at hand in the process. Comments also revealed that those affected by these

problems (related to nutrition and food security) as well as those with a professional position in the area and with decision making capacity should be involved in the process. Two participants referred to the need to set the agenda first, then involve the people according to the agenda. All of these responses revealed participants' perspectives as to what types of people should be involved in decision-making processes in this context.

Two participants made a different type of comment, which was related to who should decide who the 'right' people are, a question that was not directly asked by the interviewer or explicitly included in the tool. One participant commented that the word 'right' was unsettling, ambiguous and that who is 'right' depends on the situation. This was not surprising as this was exactly the purpose of including this language in the tool. The purpose of using this ambiguous language was to allow the actors in this community to determine what these principles mean to them and develop the details to fit the needs in their context.

**Principle 2: Involve People the 'Right' Way.** All of the emergent themes regarding what this principle means to these participants (Table 22, Appendix 3) were related to the ideas of involving process participants in appropriate ways that were involved in the development of the tool. These themes show what types of interactions these interview participants value in a decision making process such as open dialogue and clear communication, democratic and genuine participation, participants having a voice and being involved in the decision making, respect for values and differences, achieving consensus and having an unaligned, unbiased facilitator. One emergent theme of a slightly different nature was political will and commitment, as it reflects

characteristics of those involved rather than how they should be involved throughout the process.

**Principle 3: Clear, Organized Procedure and Objective.** All of the emergent themes (Table 23, Appendix 3) from comments about what this principle means to these actors in this context were related to the ideas involved in the development of the tool. However, some were not explicitly written in the tool, such as shared objectives, time frame established and respected, clear roles and responsibilities and documentation of the process. As previously mentioned, the idea of shared objectives or agendas is similar to the ideas of clear objectives and working towards identifying and serving the common interest, but not entirely the same as these ideas expressed in the tool. Establishing and respecting a time frame is an example of a norm or rule, which is an example action in the tool for this principle. Both clear roles and responsibilities and documentation of the process were expressed ideas that are not explicitly included in the tool.

**Principle 4: Focus on Securing Common Interest.** There were five emergent themes (Table 24, Appendix 3) from comments about how participants described what this principle means to them in this context. These were related to the prioritization of community needs, limiting individual and political interests, common objective consensus, an organized, continuous process and satisfaction with the process. All of these themes are related to the principles in the tool. The identification of prioritizing community needs by several participants is of interest in this context and will be further addressed in the discussion. The themes related to an organized process and satisfaction with the process were not intended in the development of the tool to be in this particular section of the tool; these ideas were envisioned as part of the third

principle (clear, organized procedure and objective) and as an implicit result of a ‘good’ process, respectively. This reflects some conceptual overlap among the principles as they are not mutually exclusive categories and are open to a certain degree of interpretation.

**Principle 5: Transparency and Accountability.** Most of the themes that emerged from the participants’ descriptions of what this principle means to them in this context (Table 25, Appendix 3) were related to the previous four principles of a ‘good’ process. The last two themes-sharing of results and follow-up on decisions- were the most specific to this particular principle. The comments representing the theme concerning sharing results referred to sharing the results with the same participants as well as with others outside the process, which is a more inclusive concept than that written in the tool about sending results to the appropriate political authorities.

It is clear that there was a lot of overlap in themes between principles and desired results, as well as within all of the principles. In the discussions about the meaning of each process element in this context, participants referred to aspects of a ‘good’ process in response to one particular principle, but in many cases the researcher had envisioned this as part of a different principle in the development of the tool. This further emphasizes that the principles of a ‘good’ process in the tool are not mutually exclusive, but rather are interconnected and influence each other. Because of the observed space for the many suggestions for changes and improvements offered by the interview participants, this overlap shows that these process elements resonate with these actors and are important to them. There were also a few comments about the order of these principles. Although we did not want to imply that the principles should be placed in any certain order, this was not made explicitly clear in the tool. We feel

this is an aspect of the process design that the actors themselves should take into consideration in the development and carrying out of a process, as explained further in the discussion.

**Would they be willing to participate? Do they feel that a process like this would be possible in this context in Guatemala?**

Participants' responses to whether these actors would be willing and whether they think that the other actors in the Guatemalan FNS community would be willing to participate in a new process like this with these principles are presented in Tables 26 and 27 in Appendix 3. These responses are summarized here. Eighteen participants stated that they would be willing to participate in a new process like the one we had just discussed. One participant said no and one said maybe. The reasons provided for saying yes were related to the fact that they have tried or are trying, they have the capacity, a process like this is necessary and the need for or value of clarity, organization, participation, shared principles, transparency and common agenda, most of which are tightly related to the desired results and principles in the tool. The participant who stated that they would not be willing to participate explained that it is because these actors are already involved in this process. The participant who indicated maybe initially said no due to a lack of time, but then mentioned that a process like this is attractive and expressed interest and willingness to participate given that it really was a good process.

Just as most of the participants stated that they would be willing to participate in a process with these principles, most of the participants thought that the other actors would be willing to participate in a process like this. However, there was more doubt

expressed in their responses concerning other actors' willingness to participate than concerning their own. Fifteen actors stated that they thought other actors would be willing to participate and their expressed reasons were related to the fact that it is a priority in the country, that results will be achieved, it is convincing to see these results, willingness to give time to achieve this, the need to understand issues, organization and collaboration. These reasons are similar to those provided when asked about their own willingness to participate, showing that these actors feel that other actors value similar aspects as they themselves do. Four actors said that other participants might be willing to participate and the expressed reasons for this doubt were related to the fact that it depends on which institution is convening the process, the lack of transparency and the existence of partisan agendas. There were a total of nineteen responses to this question; one participant was not asked this question.

Table 8 presents participants' views as to whether a process with these principles is possible in this context in Guatemala and emergent themes indicating existing barriers or necessary changes to make a process like this possible.

Table 8. Would a process like this be possible in this context in Guatemala? What would need to change in order to achieve this?

Response	Emergent themes indicating existing barriers/necessary changes	Quotes from interviews
Yes	Time	<p>Yes... But, it takes time to achieve this, but we do achieve it.</p> <p>Yes, but it shouldn't take too much time. Because the need are there and we are in a situation where the global conditions are costing lives. If it has to be done, we are going to do it, we just have to make the process more efficient. This doesn't mean that it should be done too fast, but it has to be, as you say "a good process." But short, short. We can't spends months in this. It wouldn't be worth it.</p>

Table 8 (Continued)

		I think so, even though it will be difficult. But it could be done. I think that it is very complicated, but it is necessary...Sometimes there are groups who want immediate results, but to start now and hope that in one month we will see a nutritional impact is impossible. So many people lose patience and stop participating. This makes it more complicated, but I think [this process] would be worth it.
	Clear objectives	I think so. The ideas have to be clear. Very, very clear concepts that are understood in order to address the problem with one language.  Yes, as long as whoever is leading it is clear about what we are doing, how it is going to be done, and has the authority or power to carry it out.
	Leadership	Yes, it can be done, but we need leadership...this is the missing principle.
	Political will	Of course, I'd say so. Especially now that it is open, I mean, now that we know more about the issues...The political will exists. They have good intentions, but the best decisions aren't taken. What is really involved in a process is not known...I don't think it would take much time. If there is political will, it can be done in a short time.
	Increase awareness	Yes, I think so...I think that these processes have to be made well-knowns, because they are unknown. There are few sectors that know these and they are not going to know...I think that these reports could be shared among those involved in order to raise awareness among those involved in order to take the right steps, the appropriate steps to improve these processes.
<b>No</b>	Inequalities	I don't think so. Because this is a country with a lot of inequality, with a lot of privileges. It is a country traditionally based on the fact that decisions are made by the strongest...it is a matter of putting into the real context. It seems very difficult due to the inequality among the privileges.
	Time	It is a long process. In Guatemala I don't think it is possible.
<b>Depends</b>	Clear purpose	It depends on the purpose of the process. For example, everyone places importance on the moral part. How the issue is framed is the basis of how we are going to begin to talk about it.
	Time	Maybe...but it would take time...I think that we can't yet expect that it will be like this...I don't know. Now also with the problem of the crisis...and one very, very big issue is the money that is spent in these meetings and maybe they don't result in much.
	Already in process, but interrupted or in part	In fact this has already been started. It has just been interrupted.  Part of this is already being done, so this is a way of organizing it. You have to keep emphasizing what all these parts of the process are...Maybe we are prepared for some parts, but not for all.

Eighteen interview participants were asked this question. From the twelve participants who said that a process like this would be possible, the themes that emerged as to why they felt this way were related to the principles that were discussed. Of the two participants who expressed that a process like this would not be possible, one explained that there is too much inequality in Guatemala and the other that there is a lack of time for such a process in Guatemala. Two participants expressed that whether or not a process like this would be possible in this context would depend on the proposed purpose of the process and the amount of time it takes. Two participants referred to the fact that this type of a process is already in progress, either in part or has been interrupted. These results indicate that, according to these actors, it would very likely be possible to carry out a process designed and implemented with principles in this tool in Guatemala. The barriers or challenges to carrying out a process like this, which a few interview participants identified, can actually be addressed by these same principles and actions to support them. This is an important point that is further addressed in the discussion.

**Would these actors be willing to accept the decisions resulting from a decision making process if they have previously agreed to a process that they view as a ‘good’ process? Are certain actors (from certain institutions or types of institutions) more likely to accept resulting decisions than others?**

With the purpose of hearing unprompted responses before the final research question was addressed in the interviews, seventeen interview participants were asked to explain the importance that those involved in a decision-making process agree on the process, and agree that it is a ‘good’ process (section C, questions 4-5 of interview guide). These results are presented in Table 29 of Appendix 3. All of the emergent

themes from these responses had been previously mentioned by participants in the interviews. Three were related to explicit pieces of the tool- inclusion, clear rules and conflict resolution, consensus and collective decision making. Four themes were implicit in the tool- interest, motivation and ownership of process, trust, achievement of results and acceptance of results. This last theme indicates that three interview participants referred to the last research question before this question was addressed by the interviewer.

Table 9 presents the text where reference to the acceptance of decisions resulting from a ‘good’ process was referred to prior to the interviewer introducing these ideas. It is noteworthy that before exposure to these questions a few actors mentioned the acceptance of resulting decisions in describing the importance of the actors agreeing on the process and the importance of having a clear procedure, and that one participant suggested the acceptance of resulting decisions as a desired result in the tool. These comments provide additional support for the idea that a ‘good’ process supports participants’ acceptance of resulting decisions by showing that this idea is an underlying assumption of some of these actors. Furthermore, participants’ expressed willingness to accept decisions from a process that is indeed ‘good,’ as discussed below, provides additional evidence that supports the strength of this assumption.

Table 9. Unprompted references to acceptance of decisions resulting from a good process

<b>Reference to this idea was made in discussion about...</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
Importance of a clear procedure	<p>If I show up to a process and it is a good group, I respect the results. If I said no, but everyone said yes, then let's go with the yes.</p> <p>I think that rules have to be set. The importance of this is that you will see that they agree with the results.</p>

Table 9 (Continued)

<p>Suggestions for additions to the desired results</p>	<p>I would put respect as a result...something like democratic decision making respected by the group. Something to say that the decisions are accepted as collective decisions made by the group and this is recognized, and that the fact that the decisions were made by the group is respected... I would put respect the decisions made by the group.</p>
<p>The importance of the actors agreeing on a process</p>	<p>There are people who make a decision, but later they say no. To me you have to understand they are now against the decision... [the fact that it was a good process helps] them accept the decisions.</p> <p>Because in the end people won't necessarily be satisfied with the results.</p>

Table 10 presents reasons and quotes from participants' responses to whether they would agree to accept the decisions resulting from this type of a process. All 20 participants responded yes to this question, although explanations as to why were varied. All of the responses were related to elements in the tool, either implicitly or explicitly. Most responses referred to process elements as providing the conditions necessary for accepting the decisions resulting from a 'good' process. One participant referred to the fact that part of a 'good' process should be the acceptance of the resulting decisions; this was the same participant who recommended that this be added as one of the desired results. This issue will be further addressed in the discussion section. Some participants referred to the fact that agreement on the process will allow for consensus and for accepting the final decisions. There were also three references to achieving results and producing results that will be used. One participant explained that acceptance of decisions would depend on the validity of the arguments used by other participants. There was overall willingness to accept resulting decisions expressed by the interview participants.

Table 10. Would you be willing to accept the resulting decisions?

Response & reason why	Quotes from interviews
<p><b>Yes (20 participants)</b></p> <p>Decisions made with participation and in the common interest</p> <p>If aligned with community needs</p> <p>If it is a focused, logical and in line with the law</p> <p>If participatory, democratic and consensus-based</p> <p>Satisfaction and ownership of process</p> <p>Consensus</p> <p>If the other side's point is valid</p> <p>Objectives achieved</p> <p>Part of the good process is that participants agree to accept final decisions</p>	<p>Definitely. If there has been participation. I don't have any doubt that I, or others, would accept the decisions. Even though sometimes I don't agree, but if the majority sees that this is the common good, then I would be willing. If the majority sees this as beneficial, I don't doubt that it is going to be beneficial.</p> <p>I think so, because we would try to use the decisions that result from these principles to prioritize projects...yes, we would be willing to accept any decision that is aligned with the needs of the community.</p> <p>Personal is different from institutional...the institution should be willing to follow decisions that come from this process...personally, yes, of course...if we achieve it with the proposed focus. These principles make sense in the process that we have in Guatemala and it responds to the goals of SINASAN.</p> <p>Yes, yes. Because it would be a democratic, participatory process. At some point, with participation, one shares their opinions and suggestions. And in the end, because of the diversity, it is not going to turn out exactly how you proposed, but it will be something based on consensus. It would result from consensus, so it can't be how one thinks because there are a lot of actors with different training and from many different disciplines. So, yes, I would accept the decisions.</p> <p>Of course I would...The way it is organized and that I will feel I am involved in this, I think that we would feel satisfied and united to the decision process. And obviously accept the decisions that were made democratically with the participants...First it is the way it is carried out...When people understand all these kinds of situations as those who are involved it makes it easier to agree and to reach consensus.</p> <p>Yes. But if there are other mechanisms to fulfill dietary requirements, we would be willing to accept this. There are many ways to reduce malnutrition, with or without food distribution. If we see how it can be done without, we have no problem.</p> <p>Yes, I think so. As long as it is what is intended, that the objectives are achieved. I think so, we would agree.</p> <p>I think one would have to start from the principle that the ideal agreement would be to accept the general agreements from the beginning. Based on this argument we would definitely have to consider what is done even if we don't agree. But this would be part of the agreement upon getting involved. So the answer is yes, of course we would be working with the decisions even if we don't actually agree...according to your initial agreement, which is to accept these agreements as part of a good process.</p>

Table 11 presents results to whether the interview participants felt that the other actors in the FNS policy community would be willing to accept the decisions resulting from a ‘good’ process like the one that we had discussed throughout the interview. Eighteen participants were asked this question and 11 responded yes. Many of these affirmative responses emphasized that this acceptance would depend on the fact that it really was a ‘good’ process. There were several comments emphasizing that participants would respect the consensus from a process as long as it did have these elements. There were also references to acceptance of results conditional on a democratic process, based on the law, and in the best interest of the country. Two participants provided contextual examples from the Guatemalan FNS policy community, one describing a situation where there was little acceptance of a decision that was not based on consensus, and the other describing an example of where a democratic process led to the acceptance of decisions.

Table 11. Would others be willing to accept the resulting decisions?

<b>Response &amp; reason why</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
<p><b>Yes (13 participants)</b></p> <p>Support consensus, fact that there was a good process</p> <p>Must respect the consensus</p>	<p>Yes. Yes, but I am very naive. But if I believe that they would support the decision of the distribution of Vita Cereal if it had been a group decision. This is a super controversial case in the country. Because it has many connotations, and people presume that there are many elements that are not technical, not transparent, without accountability in the decision making process...the question is, what were the criteria that were used to make this decision? What was the process to make the decisions to arrive at this conclusion? It wasn't this [point to the tool], because the right people were not there. And if they were there, they were not listened to, they could not influence the decision. And there was no transparency or accountability.</p> <p>If this is a good process, and is based on consensus, if everyone agrees, it has to be respected. It would be bad if someone did not respect, unless it is totally against their principles.</p>

Table 11 (Continued)

<p>Common interest and achieve an impact</p> <p>If it is done based on the law</p> <p>Participatory, democratic process is convincing</p>	<p>I think so. People see that in reality the decisions were made thinking of the common good, and thinking that this is going to be what really leads to an impact, people will accept it. I don't think that they are going to oppose.</p> <p>Definitely, if it is based on the structure of the law, if it comes from the law. It wouldn't be questioned because it is institutional.</p> <p>Of course, of course. I can give you a practical example with the FNS policy...There was a negotiation with the embassy of the U.S. The government of Guatemala defended the U.S. more than its own country. All of the representatives of Central America were furious with the Government of Guatemala....but then there were people dying in the streets. All of this happened when we were negotiating the policy and the law. And all of the manifestations were broken with the government except for that of FNS. I managed to convince them that we could not take the liberty of breaking off this negotiation because there were children dying of hunger. I am convinced that I convinced them not because my arguments were eloquent, but because the process had been participatory and democratic...I am convinced that there were two reasons, the subject is very sensitive, but also that the process had been carried out well.</p>
<p><b>Maybe (4 participants)</b></p> <p>I hope so; this has been proposed, but not applied</p> <p>Depends on conflict management; transparency will help</p> <p>Guatemalans are opinionated</p> <p>People change; I can't speak for them</p>	<p>I hope so. These solutions have been proposed, these solutions are there. What needs to be done is apply them.</p> <p>This is going to depend on how the conflicts that arise are managed. As long as it is discussed well and the reason for the conflict is well understood, greater consensus will be achieved, and in the end the people are going to say that they are content with the results. But, of course, not everyone is going to agree. As long as this is transparent it seems that people will not complain much...if it is transparent it is going to be very hard to block or discredit the process itself.</p> <p>In general it is likely that consensus will be reached...three Guatemalans have four opinions.</p> <p>I can't speak for them. Because faces change, people change. For example, as far as I know people were willing to work. And the reception and what was achieved was achieved due to the support of the different entities.</p>
<p><b>Some will, but others won't (3 participants)</b></p> <p>Easier to accept decisions in some cases</p>	<p>I think that all of the actors would be in our same situation. The decisions are favorable in some cases and in others unfavorable. There are cases in which it would be easier to accept some decisions more than others.</p>

Table 11 (Continued)

<p>There are disagreements</p>	<p>I think that there might be acceptance, but there are also going to be actors who are not going to accept...definitely there are going to be groups that do not agree.</p>
<p>Depends on the values of each participant</p>	<p>If I am honest I don't know, because it is going to depend on every participant. The problem is that participants are selected not only for values but rather for capacities and who are the most adequate. These are not necessarily those who have an open mind to listen and think about new ideas. We hope that people have good values, but it is definitely not always going to be like this.</p>

All of the themes that emerged from these responses had already been previously mentioned during the interviews and all were related to pieces of the tool, thereby showing that this tool resonates with them. The participants referred to the principles in the tool in order to describe why they felt that they themselves and others would be willing to accept the resulting decisions from a 'good' process, thereby indicating that these actors feel that these elements do make a process a 'good' process. Four participants indicated that others might accept the resulting decisions. One participant explained that a process like this had been proposed, but has not been applied. One participant indicated the inability to speak for others. Two indicated that acceptance would depend on conflict management and opinions, both of which are intended to be improved with the use of the tool or a similar tool for carrying out a 'good' decision making process. There were also three participants who responded that some actors would be willing to accept resulting decisions, but others won't, depending on the decision itself, management of disagreements and the values of the process participants.

It was anticipated that the participants would express more doubt in talking about others' potential actions than when speaking for themselves. This was found in discussions about the willingness of others to participate in a process like the one

proposed in the tool and the willingness of others to accept the decisions resulting from such a process. While this shows some hesitation on the part of these actors in speaking for others or making assumptions about others' potential behavior, this also reflects their awareness that it is easier to agree to a question than actually follow through in action. Speaking from their own experiences, these participants reveal that although all actors expressed willingness to accept decisions resulting from a 'good' process, not all of these actors will show such acceptance in practice. This even further emphasizes the need to address these doubts in the design and carrying out of the process with a focus on the points of identified importance for these actors, such as democratic participation, leadership and conflict management.

Regarding the question about whether certain actors from certain institutions are more likely to accept decisions resulting from a 'good' process, these results show no distinction between the different actors and their willingness to accept such decisions given that all of these participants stated that they would be willing to accept resulting decisions. Comments expressing doubt about others' acceptance of resulting decisions do not indicate who in particular might be more or less likely to accept decisions.

### **Use of evidence**

In the course of analyzing the data we noted little or no reference to the need for expert-driven or evidence-based decisions or decision-making. This led the researchers to search for this more systematically throughout the interview texts. Table 32 in Appendix 3 presents the references to these themes that did emerge. There was only one reference to the role of experts in decision making and no direct references to evidence-based decision making. However, there were many references to the fact that

those involved must have knowledge of the issues at hand and to the need for technically sound decisions. Many of these comments distinguished between political and technical roles in the decision making process and the need to maintain a balance between these. There were also direct references to the need for politicians to be involved in these processes in order to better achieve this balance and increase awareness and understanding of these issues among this group of influential decision makers. These findings are discussed in more detail in the following discussion section.

## **V. Discussion**

### **A. Overview of main findings**

The purpose of this case study was to provide an opportunity for current actors in the Guatemalan FNS policy community to reflect upon their personal perspectives and experiences with decision making, what they consider to be a ‘good’ process and how they view the importance of this type of ‘good’ process. Interviews with actors in this community were successful in allowing for this reflection and revealed that 1) a ‘good’ process is valued by this group of actors, 2) literature-based elements of such a process resonate considerably with them, and 3) they are willing to participate in a process like this, which they feel is needed and possible in this context, and to accept the resulting decisions.

#### **Value of a ‘good’ decision making process**

Interview participants made many references to the need for collective, participatory decision making and to their discontent with decisions that have been made without inclusive, collective, participatory processes, even prior to exposure to the researcher’s tool. Although they place a lot of value on technically-sound decisions, evidence-based and expert-driven decision making was not a priority for them. These actors expressed their value for inclusive, democratic participation in decision making to reveal the real needs and values of communities for the development of strategies to address issues of FNS in Guatemala.

As mentioned in the introduction, it is common that among both the international nutrition policy community and national nutrition policy communities, expert-driven or evidence-based decision making is advocated as the gold-standard for decision

making. However, community needs and values are often overlooked and are seldom directly incorporated into the same decision making processes (Majone 1989; Fischer 2000). Among this group of actors in Guatemala there was much more reference to the need for meeting community needs than to the need for experts or evidence for decision making. This was surprising in light of our observations and experiences in other nutrition policy communities, but is consistent with the efforts in Guatemala to incorporate community participation into policy making in recent years that we have learned about through our experiences there. Although there was reference to the need for knowledge-based technical decisions in this context in Guatemala, it is clear that these actors collectively believe that technical knowledge and evidence alone are insufficient for making good decisions in order to improve nutrition and food security in Guatemala, as has been addressed by others (Pelletier 2007).

There was a lot of reference to needing to identify the real needs and values of communities and that participation of civil society in these decision making processes is crucial in order to achieve this. There was also a lot of reference made to the necessity of balancing technical and political roles throughout the decision making process and the need to incorporate political considerations in decision making. Direct references to the need to include politicians in these processes in order to increase awareness and understanding of these issues among this group of influential decision makers emphasizes the value that many of these actors place on socio-political considerations in the decision making processes. Although this differs from the usual lack of attention to socio-political considerations within nutrition communities (Menon et al. 2008), this was not surprising given that these actors are not academics, alone or at all, but are players in different aspects of the political processes relevant to the FNS policy community in Guatemala.

These findings reveal that these actors were not happy with participating in just *any* process, but rather were interested in participating in a process with certain elements. This further validates the need for a discussion in this context about what these actors feel makes a ‘good’ process and the importance of such a process.

### **Agreement with key elements of a ‘good’ process**

The results show that, overall, a decision making process with the process elements and desired results in this tool resonate considerably with these actors. Prior to their exposure to the tool, participants’ overall reactions to the desired results and explanations of necessary process elements to achieve these desired results included the same process principles as in the tool. Overall reception of the tool was very positive and sparked rich conversations about the meaning and importance of each principle in the tool. The fact that no entirely new elements were brought up in the discussions about elements that they would like to add, remove or change shows that the idea of a ‘good’ process in the tool is not missing any significant pieces for these actors. Although this could be interpreted to mean that they have not previously thought about what a ‘good’ process really means to them, the fact that many suggestions for changes were offered shows that the tool did spark serious thought around these process elements. Collectively these actors’ perceptions of a ‘good’ decision making process in this context are comparable to literature-based process elements presented in this tool, which academics and practitioners from many disciplines often refer to as a ‘good’ process. Incorporation of their suggested changes for the elements of this tool, mostly regarding wording and framing, would likely lead to a tool that they could use to develop and implement a formal decision making process within this policy community in Guatemala.

This tool incorporates many literature-based ideas and assumptions, which have been carefully reduced for this study into a concise tool to facilitate communication about these aspects of a 'good' decision making process. Not all of the ideas that went into its development are made explicit in its presentation, thereby leaving even more room for context-based interpretation from the interview participants. Several participants referred to ideas that were not explicitly mentioned in the tool, but were implicit assumptions made in the development of the tool. For example, one actor emphasized the importance of the process being a win-win situation where all of the process participants feel as though they are winning. Although this concept of win-win is not explicitly written in the tool, it was implicitly involved in the development of the tool given that one assumption is that a process like that proposed in the tool, carried out based on these principles, will create a win-win situation. Win-win is a very important principle in negotiation (Fisher et al. 1991) and was incorporated in the development of this tool.

Among the many examples of participants' comments which were implicit in the tool are references to truly achieving the objectives and meeting community needs in describing the importance of a 'good' process. Truly achieving objectives is the overall purpose of a process based on these principles and meeting community needs is directly related to serving the common interest, which is explicit in the tool. These comments directly related to implicit assumptions in the tool provide further validation for the conclusion that the process proposed in the tool resonates substantially with these actors and could form the basis for a 'good' process to achieve their goals in this context.

Participant's comments about the tool being too general is a direct result of the researcher's intentions to develop a generic tool for the study rather than a Guatemala- or FNS- specific tool for use in their setting. As 'outsiders' of the Guatemalan FNS policy community we do not have the ability to say how to overcome the challenges these actors have identified. Nor would we want to tell these actors exactly how to address these context-specific challenges. An important part of process, as indicated by these same actors in these interviews, is that the participants have ownership of the process. By developing their own process, guided by some points of common understanding, it is more likely that the process itself will be relevant, appropriate and acceptable for these actors in this context. Again, the fact that these actors put a lot of emphasis on the need for a 'good' process based on the principles proposed in the tool indicates that this general set of principles could serve as the base in order to initiate a more detailed development and carrying out of such a process.

**Expressed need for a 'good' process and willingness to participate and accept resulting decisions**

Overall, these actors expressed that there is a need for this type of a process within the FNS policy community in Guatemala. Their perceptions about the need for a process like this were clear in their explanations for why they would be willing to participate in this type of a process and whether it would be possible in this context. Although there were a few points of doubt expressed around the possibility of carrying out this type of a process, the challenges identified can in fact be addressed by the very process. For example, the identified issues of timing, setting a clear purpose and inequalities in the country can be addressed in the development and carrying out of the decision making process. These points of doubt about the possibility of such a process expose points where these actors in this community could focus in order to develop

and implement a process most appropriate in this context in order to most effectively address these identified challenges or barriers.

Remarkably, all interview participants stated that they would be willing to accept the decisions resulting from a process with the elements presented in the tool. The multiple references to acceptance of decisions as conditional on the fact that the process truly was a 'good' process with the discussed principles further supports the conclusions that these actors value a 'good' process and that the principles in this tool can serve as the base for such a process in this context. Of course this expressed willingness does not guarantee that if a process like this were to take place that all the actors would indeed accept the resulting decisions. However, these responses do reveal the value they place on good process and indicate the conditions that are important for these actors in order to achieve acceptance of such results. For example, knowing that democratic, consensus based decision making is important for many of these actors, they can shape the process to support this type of behavior and communication in order to support the acceptance of final decisions resulting from the process.

The references to acceptance of decisions resulting from a 'good' process with these principles before these questions were introduced by the interviewer reveals that this is an underlying assumption for some of these actors. This was an interesting finding given that it is often an underlying assumption in academic and practitioner literature as well, as previously discussed in the Background and Literature Review. In this study we attempted to understand how these actors explain the acceptance of decisions resulting from decision making processes. These results provide evidence that acceptance of decisions resulting from a 'good' process is an underlying assumption

for some of these actors, that they express willingness to accept these decisions and that they value a good process. However, this study would need to be complemented with actual cases of processes and acceptance outcomes in order to evaluate this question in practice.

## **B. Strengths and limitations**

These participants' reactions to the interview tool support that this tool as a whole resonates with them. The majority of comments regarding the tool supported their agreement with these elements of a 'good' process. However, the fact that participants also made many suggestions to modify and improve these elements and the presentation of them in the tool, and that there were a few points of direct disagreement with a particular element, show that there was space in these interviews for disagreement. Therefore, we believe that disagreement with the elements in the proposed tool was politically and socio-culturally acceptable in these interviews and that desirability bias was limited. This concurs with my interpretation as the interviewer, that these interview participants had the space and desire to be sincere in their responses, given that they were all aware that the results would be shared with the entire group of actors and that their personal identities would remain confidential. As we have learned from our previous engagement with these actors, they have a desire to make their opinions known within their policy community. This is an important point of validation for the overall resonance of this idea of a 'good' process with these actors and could provide support for these actors to see that they do agree on main pieces of a 'good' decision making process.

It is important to recognize that the interview participants, who express substantial agreement with these principles of a 'good' process, the need for this in the FNS

decision making context in Guatemala and willingness to participate in such a process, are all current actors in this FNS policy community in Guatemala. These actors play important roles in decision making processes for national strategies to combat chronic malnutrition and food and nutrition insecurity in Guatemala. Their opinions and ideas matter within this community and they have the power and ability to carry out a formal decision making process with specific principles if they choose to do so. Despite this strong agreement, the decision to undertake such a process would ultimately rest with a small number of individuals with the positional authority to initiate it. However, these individuals are readily accessible to the larger set of actors, many of whom were interviewed for the present study, who could exert substantial influence in this direction, especially if they act collectively.

It is also important to emphasize that the development of the tool was unavoidably interpretive and subjective. These same literature-based principles of a 'good' process could have been arranged in a variety of different ways and it is important to recognize that there are many ways to envision a 'good' process. This was exactly the purpose of the present research- to attempt to put the literature-based elements of a 'good' process together in one succinct tool that can be easily and quickly communicated in order to create discussion to understand these actors' perceptions of such a process.

The interviewer had established rapport with these actors during the year prior to these interviews, allowing for safe, comfortable interview environments (as felt by the interviewer) for both face-to-face and telephone interviews, which is believed to have facilitated candid responses from participants during the interviews. In order to assure that the interview transcripts were acceptable to the participants prior to analysis, a member checking process was used. Transcripts were sent via email to each of the

interview participants requesting their suggested changes, confirmation of accuracy and final acceptance for use in this research. The validity of these findings is supported by the fact that participants' unprompted responses resonate considerably with the literature, and their prompted responses brought up many of the implicit ideas that are built into this process tool. This shows that their perceptions are in line with both the literature and my own interpretations of it, as expressed in the tool.

One potential limitation of these findings is due to the relatively small number of actors interviewed. However, as mentioned above, all of the interview participants currently have (or recently have had) a voice and influence on some aspect of decision making within this FNS policy community. However, it is still important to recognize that since not every influential actor within the FNS policy community was interviewed, the possibility remains that some views may not be fully represented by the findings from this sample.

One limitation of the data collection was that the presentation of the electronic copy of the tool in most of the telephone interviews could have influenced responses to what elements are needed to achieve these desired results. The intention of this question was to get their unprompted responses before their exposure to the five principles of a 'good' process in the interview tool. To avoid the potential bias of wandering eyes, we could have sent the tool in two separate pieces (desired results first, then principles of a 'good' process), but we felt that this would have further complicated and lengthened the interview process. Half of the interviews were not exposed to this potential bias given that they were carried out face-to-face and the principles section of the tool remained covered until after responses to this question. There is no indication that those who did receive the entire tool commented in light of the principles rather than

their own perceptions and the influence of this bias would only have affected the responses to this one question, thereby not limiting the validity of these results as a whole.

Another potential limitation with the methods of this study is in the use of the interview tool to provoke participant reflection. Rather than presenting a tool for them to comment on, we could have started with nothing and just probed for their unprompted perceptions about process. While starting these conversations without a tool may have been successful in limiting the researcher's bias in their responses, there would have been a compromise in the quality and depth of the discussions. Most people are not intimately familiar with process-related issues and have not previously spent much time thinking through the principles that make a process a 'good' process. In addition, given that the principles included in the tool are widely accepted as principles of a 'good' process, it seemed most relevant to start with these generally accepted principles and dive into whether these are applicable and what each of them means in this context in Guatemala. Therefore, the purpose of this study was focused on understanding these actors' perspectives on these particular literature-based principles of a 'good' decision making process.

It is important to clarify the bias that the researcher brings to the interpretation of this study. Due to the very nature of this approach to qualitative research, analysis of these interviews is interpretive and is inescapably influenced by the researcher's subjectivity and interpretations of the data (Creswell 2003). However, it is also important to note that the researcher has intended to remain as transparent as possible throughout the research process. For example, I have made efforts to acknowledge my own biases in my interactions with the interview participants and emphasize that my intentions for

carrying out this research are not merely to contribute to the academic literature with a case study of the Guatemalan FNS policy community. I have emphasized to all of the participants that my primary goal is to be able to take advantage of the fact that I am an ‘unbiased outsider’ of this community in order to collect individual participant views, put them together in a systematic way, and reflect their collective views back to them in hopes of supporting their agendas for change within this policy community.

### **C. Implications for policy and practice**

As noted above, the results of this research are potentially meaningful for these actors of this policy community in Guatemala. These findings can provide them as a group with the awareness that other actors in the FNS policy community also feel that a ‘good’ process is needed in this context and are willing to participate in and accept the decisions that result from a process, as long as it is a ‘good’ process. These findings also provide each of these actors with an understanding of what the other actors in this policy community consider to be a ‘good’ process and how the group’s views compare with their own personal values and interests. Given the substantial resonance of this tool with these actors, together with the suggested changes and improvements, this tool can serve as the foundation for these actors to design and carry out a decision making process in order to address the main challenges that they face in achieving their goals within the FNS policy community. A process like the one described and accepted by these actors will undoubtedly be a notable support for their advancement toward the goals of reducing chronic malnutrition and improving food and nutrition security that Guatemala has proposed to achieve.

The purpose of this research is not to generalize to other policy communities within Guatemala or elsewhere, as these findings are bound temporally, geographically and

socially. However, these findings confirm that an emphasis on evidence-based decision making, without an equal emphasis on the nature and quality of the decision making and policy development *process*, is unlikely to produce policies that are well-informed in the broader sense, supported by a wide range of stakeholders and consistent with democratic norms (Stern et al. 1996). This is a perspective that is largely lacking in the international nutrition community, among others, which tends to focus on evidence-based and expert-driven approaches to policy development (Allen and Gillespie 2001; Lancet 2008).

#### **D. Suggestions for future research**

In Guatemala, further follow-up on the development and carrying out of a formal decision making process with these principles is recommended in order to assure that, if desired by these actors, appropriate action is taken in light of these findings and these actors' efforts to support this research process. It seems most appropriate that collective leadership among the actors themselves is built in order to follow-up on these findings, as indicated by interview participants.

Although these findings indicate that these actors would be willing to accept the decisions resulting from a 'good' process, due to the methodology of this study, this provides only suggestive empirical evidence. The application of these findings is limited to this specific policy community and provides further evidence that acceptance of decisions from a 'good' process is often an underlying assumption. Case studies of actual processes to see how these principles play out in practice and whether the process contributes to their acceptance of resulting decisions could be carried out in this context to provide stronger empirical evidence to further support that the quality of the process does indeed affect the acceptance of resulting decisions.

In other policy communities, these same issues can be investigated to understand what a ‘good’ process means, and whether a ‘good’ process is needed and desired in different contexts. There is a great need for more process-related research and discussion, specifically within the international nutrition policy community. In this policy community there is still an enormous amount of effort placed on creating formal institutional structures to address these complex issues, but little paid to the processes that must occur within and between structures in order to achieve the goals of improving nutrition. Given that the majority of effort and advocacy in this policy community is focused on evidence-based and expert-driven decision making, focus on process-related issues could allow for the unveiling of the importance of normative and socio-political considerations that are most often not taken into account in decision making processes.

#### **E. Final conclusions**

The most important conclusion of this study is that these actors in the FNS policy community in Guatemala show a great amount of interest in the elements of a ‘good’ decision making process. This study indicates that the literature-based process elements resonate substantially with these actors and they express both the desire to participate in a decision making process like this as well as to accept the resulting decisions. These actors also indicate that a process with the proposed principles is both needed and possible in this context in Guatemala. This work could be a good starting point for initiating further discussions among actors within this community about creating and initiating a process with these principles that these actors value as important for achieving their goals within this community as well as the goals that Guatemala has set as a country.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Interview guide

- Hello...it's great to talk to you again...
- [Thank you for sharing your comments about the draft report.]  
OR  
[I am looking forward to receiving your comments on the draft report. You can send them to me via email, or you can tell me here over the phone if you prefer.]
- First of all, do you have a time limit for today's conversation? It should take between 40 minutes and an hour. Is that okay for you?
- As you read in my email, I would like to talk to you specifically about the process-related suggestions about decision making process that were made at the end of this report. We suggested that the actors in this community participate in a formal process in order to reach agreement on strategies to reduce chronic malnutrition and food insecurity in Guatemala. Today I would like to hear your ideas and suggestions regarding this recommendation in particular.
- Before we begin, I would like to know if I can record the conversation. The purpose is to transcribe the interview for analysis, but your neither your name nor your identity will be made known anywhere. Only my thesis advisor and I will have access to this information. Will you allow me to record this conversation?

<b>A. Comments about the draft report:</b>	<b>(Approx. 5-10 minutes)</b>
Address their comments, if they have already sent them	
Did you read the draft report?	
Do you have any additional comments about the main sections (main themes or causes and consequences)?	Content, validity and reactions?
Do you find the report to be useful?	Why or why not? In what sense?
What are your thoughts about the final section with process-related suggestions?	Content, validity and reactions about these suggestions?
Do you feel that these suggestions are adequate to support your efforts to improve chronic malnutrition and food insecurity?	Why or why not? Do you have any changes to suggest?
<b>B. Characteristics of a 'good' process</b>	<b>(Approx. 20-30 minutes)</b>
1. In general, how are decision making processes carried out regarding the improvement of nutrition in Guatemala?	Who participates? Who facilitates the process? Do you feel that in general these are good processes or not?
2. Now I would like you to think of a moment in the past year when a big decision was taken about these strategies...	Can you give me an example from Guatemala where a decision making process was carried out well, or where a process was not carried out well?
3. Do you think that decision making processes in the FNS community in Guatemala can improve? Is a good process needed?	Why or why not? If YES, what changes could improve these processes? How do you think that these changes will improve the processes?

<p>4. The purpose of carrying out a good process would be in order to achieve certain results. I have an idea about 4 of these results that would be important to achieve from a good decision making process. READ the 4 desired results in the interview tool.</p>	<p>What do you think about these? Are there any that you would like to add, eliminate or change? Why or why not?</p> <p>4B. What is the most important result? Or are they all equally important?</p>
<p>5. If a process were designed in order to achieve these desired results, what characteristics or elements would the process have? [Or in other words: What elements are important in order for a process to be considered a 'good' process?]</p>	<p>Details? Can you explain more about...?</p>
<p>6. [You mentioned some of the same elements or characteristics that other actors and the literature have highlighted as important, and that are generally accepted as elements of a 'good' process.] I have organized these elements into five main categories of principles that are important for a 'good' process. I would like to show you these to see what you think.</p> <p>Send figure via email (if they can receive the e-file now), ask that they write down the five categories (if they cannot receive an e-file now) or present the tool on paper (face-to-face interviews).</p> <p>First I would like to read you the list of elements, then will ask you to describe each one in your context. READ and briefly explain the five principles.</p>	<p>You mentioned this and this, but what do you think about x...?</p> <p>What does the (first, second...fifth) principle mean in this context in Guatemala? Do you think that this is important for a 'good' process?</p> <p>6B. In general, what do you think about these elements of a 'good' process? Are they any elements that you would like to add, eliminate or change? Can you explain why?</p>
<p><b>C. Acceptance of a 'good' process</b></p>	<p><b>(Approx. 10-15 minutes)</b></p>
<p>1. A process like this might sound like a good idea, but it might be a challenge to implement. Would you be willing to participate in a new process that includes these principles as we have talked about today?</p>	<p>Why or why not?</p>
<p>2. Do you think that the other actors in this community would be willing to participate in a new process that includes these principles as we have talked about today?</p> <p>2B. According to you, what is the importance that the actors agree on the process?</p>	<p>Why or why not?</p>
<p>3. Do you think that a process like this one we have discussed today would be possible to carry out in this context in Guatemala?</p>	<p>Why or why not? What changes would be necessary in order to make this kind of a process possible?</p>

<p>4. If a process like this were carried out well, would you be willing to accept the decisions that result from the process, even though they were not the ones that you or your institution would have preferred?</p>	<p>Why or why not?</p> <p>Ask this even if they say that they would not be willing to participate in a new process.</p> <p>4B. Devil's Advocate: What about if you were opposed to [food distribution], but the resulting decision was in favor of [food distribution]? Ask about their specific interests to probe on this further.</p>
<p>5. Do you think that the other actors would be willing to accept the decisions that result from the process, even though they were not the ones that they or their institution would have preferred?</p>	<p>Why or why not?</p>
<p><b>D. Closing</b></p>	<p><b>(Approx. 5 minutes)</b></p>
<p>Do you have any additional comments for me?</p>	<p>Do you have any questions for me?</p>
<p>I would like to know if I can send you the transcript of this interview to give you the opportunity to review it and make any necessary changes, to be sure that I have understood our conversation today and to confirm that I can use this transcript in the analysis for my MS thesis.</p>	<p>Can I send you the transcript for your revision and confirmation of your acceptance?</p>
<p>Thank you for your support in this effort and for taking your time to talk with me about these decision making processes. I wish you much luck in all of your efforts towards the reduction of chronic malnutrition and food insecurity in Guatemala.</p>	<p>We will be in contact soon. Thanks again...</p>

**POST-INTERVIEW REFLECTIONS**

Take notes reflecting on:

- Place, conditions of interview
- Interviewee's reaction to the interview
- How well I feel that I asked the questions
- How was the rapport
- Did I get what I wanted from the interview?
- Any emergent themes?

## **Appendix 2. Lists and brief explanations of codes used in data analysis process.**

### **Codes and brief explanations, by table in text and Appendix 3**

#### **Reactions to four desired results (Table 3 in text; Table 12 Appendix 3)**

**Action-** easy to say or write, but action is another story that's harder to get  
**Awareness of problem-** chronic malnutrition is not readily visible  
**Benefit-** Guatemala would benefit from these results  
**Common objective-** important for all involved to have a common objective  
**Communication-** needs to improve among actors to coordinate efforts  
**Community authorities-** need to be involved in decision making  
**Community needs-** need to be understood and taken into consideration  
**Consensus-** there is a question as to whether or not it can be achieved  
**Coordination-** among actors and between institutions is needed  
**Evidence-** reference to evidence-based decision-making  
**Facilitator-** reference to use of a facilitator in decision-making processes  
**Follow-up-** need to follow-up process with actions  
**Group decision-** decisions should not be made by one person, but by the group  
**Information sharing-** all parties/levels should have access to information  
**Interests-** important to consider the different interests of stakeholders  
**Law-** reference to the SAN law  
**Leadership-** needed to achieve goals of collaboration, coordination and change  
**Learning-** an important result of the process  
**Ownership-** participants need to feel that the process is theirs  
**Political commitment-** needed to take action at a higher (political) level  
**Resources-** needed to take action on decisions made  
**Respect-** for different interests and values is important, but is often lacking  
**Responsibility-** who will do what, when will they do it and who's accountable?  
**Results known-** need to make results of decision making processes known  
**Scale-** there are lots of good experiences (i.e. NGOs), but at small scale  
**Sensitivity-** people need to be more sensitive to issues related to malnutrition  
**Spaces-** need spaces for coordination and collaboration in decision-making, etc.  
**Systematize-** need to systematize processes and document them well  
**Trust-** important for coordination and progress  
**Vertical-** vertical mentality inhibits decision-making  
**Will-** political will and will of population are needed

#### **What is the importance of a 'good' process? (Tables 4 and 5 in text)**

Accept decisions  
Achieve objectives  
Commitment  
Consensus  
Continuity  
Coordination  
Define roles and responsibilities for inter-institutional coordination  
Dialogue  
Improve collaboration  
Leadership  
Meet community needs  
Reduce overlap and duplication of efforts and resources  
Representation

Respect  
Trust  
Valuable contributions

**What process elements are needed to achieve these results?**

**(Table 6 in text; Table 19 Appendix 3)**

**Clear objectives-** objectives of a process need to be clear to all involved

**Clear rules-** of the processes themselves

**Collective decision making-** decisions not made by one individual

**Communication channels-** need to establish for inter-institutional communication

**Coordination-** among all actors involved

**Credibility-** among actors involved

**Dialogue-** among all actors involved

**Documentation-** of procedures is needed

**Establish principles-** for the procedures

**Establish procedures-** of the processes themselves, so it is clear to all

**Establish time-** need to establish time frame of meetings and respect them

**Evidence-based-** decision-making based on evidence, not politics

**Improved voting mechanism-** needed to improve decision making

**Involve decision makers-** those involved have power to make decisions

**Knowledge-** of participants about topics needs to be shared prior to process

**Leadership-** individual, institutional and shared

**Local knowledge-** needed for decision-making

**Organization-** needed throughout the decision-making processes

**Participation-** varied, wide participation in decision-making processes

**Planning-** needed both before and during processes

**Provide information-** about topics, process and objectives prior to involvement

**Shared objectives-** participants need to have shared objectives and agendas

**Short-, medium- and long-term-** different results expected at different times

**Sustainability with changes-** in government, personnel, etc.

**Technical expertise-** needed for some decision-making

**Technical group-** need to form in order to make certain technical decisions

**Transparency-** at all levels of the processes

**Trust-** in each of the other actors/institutions involved at each level/stage

**Trust in leader-** those involved trust the leader(s) of decision-making processes

**Work together-** Actors and institutions involved need to work together

**What does “Involve the ‘right’ people” mean in this context? (Table 21 Appendix 3)**

**Affected-** those affected by these issues should be involved

**Civil society-** should be involved

**Commitment-** participants need to be committed to the topics and processes

**Decision-making capacity-** those with power to make decisions

**Experience-** those with experience

**Interested-** those interested in the topics at hand

**Knowledge-** those who have knowledge of the topics at hand

**Leaders-** should participate; need leadership

**Multi-disciplinary-** multiple sectors and disciplines involved

**Multi-levels-** government, politicians, technical experts, civil society, etc.

**Opinion-** those with opinions to share

**Political-** those with political power and influence

**Position-** professional position makes/ doesn't make someone a key actor

**Process-** mechanisms for participation are important  
**Proposals-** people need to have proposals, not just complaints  
**Representation-** everyone can't be involve, participations has to have limits  
**Structures-** they already exist; don't need to created new ones for participation  
**Technical-** those with technical knowledge  
**Trust-** participants must trust each other; built by experience  
**Voice-** participants have to have a voice  
**Who decides-** reference to who should decided who should be involved

**What does "Involve people the 'right' way" mean in this context?**

**(Table 22 Appendix 3)**

**Awareness-** awareness of problems and topics facilitates good communication  
**Common interest-** is served and individual interests are not served by process  
**Communication-** among all actors at all levels  
**Consensus-** decisions made by consensus  
**Democratic-** process guided by democratic principles  
**Depoliticize-** not allow politics to lead all conversations and decisions  
**Dialogue-** open and inclusive  
**Facilitator-** unaligned and unbiased facilitator of the process  
**From beginning-** involve the 'right' people from the beginning of the process  
**Genuine participation-** not just present, but participate and are considered  
**Involved in decision making-** participants can influence decision making  
**Multiculturalism-** expect and respect differences  
**True commitment-** those involved are truly committed, not just discourse  
**Trust-** People are trusted and exhibit trust in others  
**Values-** values are considered and respected throughout the process  
**Voice-** decision making process is a space for true expression

**What does "Clear, organized procedure and objective" mean in this context?**

**(Table 23 Appendix 3)**

**Agenda-** whether establish before or after participants are invited?  
**Clear roles and responsibilities-** clear to participants throughout process  
**Clear rules-** need to be clear to all participants  
**Conflict management-** procedures agreed upon prior to initiation of process  
**Consensus-** reach through dialogue with all participants  
**Coordination-** of all participants  
**Group function-** need a 'manual' of how will work together & with roles defined  
**Inclusion-** everyone present is included  
**Leadership-** need prior to process in order to promote the process  
**Monitoring and evaluation-** iterative system to provide feedback for changes  
**Norms-** for process and who is involved is needed  
**Participation-** from people involved in dialogue  
**Planned-** procedure is planned prior to and during process and is clear  
**Political agenda-** decision making processes need to become part of this  
**Publicize-** make process results known to participants and to general public  
**Simplify-** focus on only a few objectives so can actually achieve them  
**Strategic plans-** Need them to reach objectives  
**Systematization-** documentation of processes  
**Time-** must be clearly defined and respected  
**Vote-** this differs from consensus

**What does “Focus on finding and serving the common interest” mean in this context? (Table 24 Appendix 3)**

**Commitment**- needed at all levels  
**Common agenda**- agenda should be shared by all actors involved  
**Common objective**- needed  
**Communication**- needed among all actors involved  
**Community needs**- meet population, community, local, etc. needs  
**Conflict resolution**- procedures needed in order to have good communication  
**Consensus**- decisions should be made by reaching consensus  
**Continuity**- needed; people & government change positions often  
**Coordination**- needed among all actors involved  
**Corruption**- Guatemala culture affects ability to reach the common interest  
**Culture**- differences need to be understood  
**Everyone benefits**- find the win-win solutions  
**Impact**- to see long-term impact need to have common interest  
**Individual interests**- process should not serve individual interests  
**Leadership**- needed at all levels  
**Long-term**- it is a long process to achieve these principles  
**Money**- Guides actions (“money talks”)  
**Organized process**- needed to achieve this principle  
**Political**- limit political interests because they are too influential  
**Priority actions**- actions needed first where problem is worst  
**Satisfaction**- participants are happy to participate, share and contribute **Sectors**- different sectors have different interests  
**Understand problem**- as an important public problem

**What does “Transparency and accountability” mean in this context? (Table 25 Appendix 3)**

**Achieve process goals**- stay on task throughout process and achieve principles  
**Action**- act on decisions  
**Collaboration**- in order to improve existing problems  
**Consensus**- on issues in process  
**Contribution**- to decision-making process and final decisions  
**Corruption**- is a problem and is anti-transparent  
**Financial**- accountability depends on financial resources available  
**Interest**- participants are interested in and emotionally attached to the topics  
**Monitoring and evaluation**- need system to monitor & evaluate progress  
**Participation**- open, broad  
**Proactive**- participants need to be proactive throughout the process  
**Recognition**- of participants' contributions  
**Share results**- with all participants  
**Sustained**- process is sustained over the long-term  
**Trust**- between actors involved; needed, but is often lacking  
**Turf**- everyone wants to defend their political or functional turf

**What would need to change in order to achieve a process like this in this context in Guatemala? (Table 8 in text; Table 28 Appendix 3)**

**Clear objectives**- need clear, understandable concepts; role for leaders in this  
**Clear purpose**- purpose of process must be clear to all participants  
**Increase awareness**- these processes need to be made well-known  
**Inequalities**- existing inequalities are major barriers  
**Leadership**- currently missing

**Political will**- have good intentions, but lacking follow through with actions

**Time**- takes time to achieve this

**What is the importance that the participants agree on the process and agree that certain elements make a good process? (Table 29 Appendix 3)**

**Interest**- participants have greater interest

**Motivation**- participants become motivated

**Ownership of process**- participants feel as though the process is theirs

**Inclusion**- participants feel included

**Clear rules**- type of process and rules are discussed and agreed upon

**Conflict resolution**- participants have clarity on how conflict that arises will be dealt with

**Consensus**- consensus can be reached

**Collective decision making**- decisions are made together as a group

**Trust**- builds trust in people and in the process itself

**Achievement of results**- results can be achieved

**Acceptance of results**- results will be accepted

**References to technical, knowledge-based and evidence-based decision-making (Table 32 Appendix 3)**

**Institutional roles : technical versus political**- there is a role for both parts

**How decision making is or should be**- more technical and knowledge-based

**The 'right' people involved: technical versus political**- there is a role for both types

**Accepting resulting decisions**- technical decisions will be more respected

**Results of a 'good' process**- participation generates accountability

**Experts**- different definitions of the term 'expert' may exist

### Appendix 3. Extended Results Tables (Tables 12-32)

Table 12. (Extended Table 3) Overall reactions & suggested additions, deletion or changes to all four desired results

Emergent themes from comments	Quotes from interviews
<p><b>Add respect for collective decisions as a principle</b></p>	<p>Of course.</p> <p>Here I would put respect as a result...something like democratic decision making respected by the group. Something to say that the decisions are accepted as collective decisions made by the group and this is recognized, and that the fact that the decisions were made by the group is respected...define the mechanisms for group decision making...I would put respect the decisions made by the group...First it's hard make a decision, and second when a decision is made, everyone walk out and complains.</p>
<p><b>Results need more precision</b></p>	<p>I think that they need to be specified more because I feel like they are very ideal...remember that the central nature of public policy is basically interests...Understanding and participation alone don't help much. On the other hand if we were talking about a result like a shared agenda that is agreed upon by consensus among the actors, I would say yes, this is a result because it says that there are in agreement, that they do have understanding. I think that in the wording this needs to more specified because I think as it is, it is difficult to provide indicators because these are very subjective things I would say...It should be measurable. How do I measure awareness, or understanding or trust?</p>
<p><b>Need indicators to measure these results</b></p>	<p>I want to clarify the concept of a desired result. I see these four as necessary for success. Yes, I agree.</p>
<p><b>Necessary conditions to achieve results</b></p>	<p>More than results I think these are conditions to be able to initiate a process.</p>
<p><b>Community authorities involved</b></p>	<p>Yes, it looks good to me, but I would just add that the local authorities at community level are involved.</p>
<p><b>Make results known</b></p>	<p>Of course. Definitely. I would add make the conclusions that were arrived at known among the same participants and among the public, since the goal is involvement and building awareness of the people who have participated to share their opinions.</p>
<p><b>Common objective</b></p> <p><b>Communication</b></p> <p><b>Trust</b></p>	<p>I think that these are necessary, but maybe not sufficient. Because focus on a common objective is very important. I think that communication is a strong trap for decision making. Bridges must be built, not necessarily bridges in the same issues. There is a need to know other areas. Trust is necessary.</p>

Table 12 (Continued)

<p><b>Leadership</b></p>	<p>Just because two people both work in FNS it doesn't mean that they will work well together. And this is because in FNS there has been little progress. Leadership is a facilitator of communication.</p>
<p><b>Sensitivity</b> <b>Awareness of problem</b></p>	<p>In general, they look good to me. Yes...it's not about being there, but about feeling. In fact I feel...the way that the issue is raised, that people explain it. That people say I want...because we have lost sensitivity for this problem...Here in Guatemala, unfortunately Nobody sees the malnutrition.</p>
<p><b>Respect</b> <b>Interests</b></p>	<p>It looks good to me. For me the most important are...get to know each other and respect differences...and I think that this word ['interests'] is key. The different actors have different interests...You cannot make decisions for the country that are going to benefit you directly.</p>
<p><b>Responsibility</b></p>	<p>They seem pretty well placed to me. To these four I would add the responsibility of all the actors, of all the sectors.</p>
<p><b>Decision-making power</b></p>	<p>I share these desired results. All four seem very clear to me...The big problem in Guatemala is that the best way to not do anything is to generate discussions that don't result in decisions. It's hard for us to make decisions. We have a very vertical mentality. Which means that we wait for others to make decisions for us. And many times generate discussion for decision making in meetings, events, like you are mentioning, is to not make decisions. In decision making, even when we are participatory, we should be more concrete so that the results can lead to decisions. Participation is often is without direction...Participation should be another desired result. It has been difficult to achieve better participation, but constructive, positive participation, more than just another element of the process, we should see it as a result of the process. Because we want a change in attitudes, which is fundamental. But if we view it as an element of the process we are going to generate nothing more than participation as an instrument, when what I want is a change in attitudes.</p>
<p><b>Genuine participation</b> <b>Change in attitudes</b></p>	<p>I think that the first there are good, but the fourth should be changed...without a budget, we don't do anything.</p>
<p><b>Financial resources</b> <b>Documentation of process</b></p>	<p>I think yes, this part about equality and justice, that the people feel involved, I think yes, that it is good. Maybe, one problem that exists here in Guatemala is that the processes are not systematized...to have all of the processes documented and systematized to have a written report. There needs to be a written report, because importance is not given to what has happened and then another group comes to take up another process and the people don't know what has already been done and sometimes they start the processes all over again.</p>

Table 12 (Continued)

<b>Awareness of problem</b>	That each person who shows up has the same concept of what FNS is and that one does not try to overpower another's concept. So there has to be an understanding of what FNS is.
<b>Process facilitator</b>	A leader, someone who is more a facilitator...it has to be an internal person...who does this is SESAN, by law SESAN coordinates. SESAN does not implement. The role of SESAN is to be an internal facilitator. Not that each actor is going to do a piece. It has to be a coordinated effort. They have to see that they have a common objective, and this would be a desired result. There should be an understanding that everyone is working towards the same goal.
<b>Coordination</b>	
<b>Common objective</b>	
<b>Collective decision-making &amp; action</b>	Maybe this is a bit short. It is very oriented toward the part that people have awareness and participation. What is lacking is that...in Guatemala there has not been a decision that this is what is going to be done and everyone does it...here someone says I am going to do it when I want to because I am a good person, but there is no commitment to action, to say that this is the action for the country because we are in a serious condition. I think that everything you put here is good, but for me what is missing is political commitment to act, really translated into action.
<b>Political commitment</b>	
<b>Clear process, consensus</b>	Maybe one thing that could be added is that the process is very clear, that everyone agrees. Also that it is internalized and they take ownership of it, that they promote it. One participates, considers it as their own...the truth is that it seems to me that these are results of a process so that it is successful. This is missing here, we would benefit a lot from these results. I think that this is what is needed.
<b>Ownership of process</b>	

Table 13. Comments about result 1: Increased awareness, understanding and consideration among all participants of the existing diversity of knowledge, interests and values around the policy issues at hand

<b>Quotes from interviews indicating...</b>	
<b>Agreement with and expressed need for this desired result:</b>	<b>Disagreement with or expressed lack of need for this desired result</b>
Yes, exactly this. It looks very good to me	
Yes, I think this is fundamental.	
[This] is the most important.	
This here is good, increased awareness.	

Table 13 (Continued)

<p>This part about greater awareness [is the most important], that the country is dealing with these problems and that they know about them. Awareness and helping them know the true reality of the existing poverty in Guatemala, and the chronic malnutrition and food insecurity of course. Because many of the government staff members come to these spaces and they do not know, so they can't become aware of these situations.</p> <p>Among them they do not understand that there are no results that can be seen immediately. They have their interests and many political interests.</p> <p>For me the most important are...get to know each other and respect the different...and I think that this word is key ['interests].</p> <p>In the law we managed to put a phrase that says 'with cultural pertinence' that refers directly to the focus on values and principles.</p> <p>For me everything generates increased awareness and greater understanding, it is obvious, something that occurs because the process leads to it, it happens because of the process itself.</p> <p>This is a result that occurs, increased awareness about the causes and consequences of malnutrition. Yes, in fact there is a lot of this in general.</p> <p>I think a lot of awareness among the actors already exists...I would say that in the last 3 years, there is already greater awareness, even more now that so much importance is given to the food crisis that exists everywhere.</p>	
<p><b>Quotes from interviews indicating suggested additions, deletions or changes</b></p>	
<p>Where it says 'increased awareness', I think it should say 'awareness raised' because there is a lack of awareness raised to involve the right people in the right way...in this case among the decision makers. But awareness also needs to be raised at the community level.</p> <p>I would add raise awareness among the politicians.</p> <p>Maybe here in understanding, the way people are reached should be emphasized, so people feel, because they can understand. But you change the example, and they no longer understand. An understanding of concepts that can be applied to any situation.</p>	

Table 14. Comments about result 2: Building of trust, respect and relationships for future collaboration

<b>Quotes from interviews indicating...</b>	
<b>Agreement with and expressed need for this desired result:</b>	<b>Disagreement with or expressed lack of need for this desired result</b>
<p>Sometimes there is a lot of feeling, but it doesn't make sense...If you think about it, you are going to resolve a situation because you want to, because you are convinced of the 'why'...The people that are making decisions have never felt what it's like to be hungry. The problem lies there.</p> <p>I like this a lot because I think it pushes a lot towards working in groups and moves away from personal interests.</p>	<p>The building of trust for future collaboration does not occur in this process. The civil society is sitting together with the vice president and the ministers...their relationships are not built on trust...This [building of trust] is not a result of the process in SAN...And I don't think that it is expected of CONASAN either. The processes of participation have to be understood in different contexts. This is a political process, very political...I think that it is impossible, due to how things are in CONASAN. The ministers go and participate in CONASAN, but in real life there is no compliance. There is no mechanism to generate trust, respect and relationships.</p>
<b>Quotes from interviews indicating suggested additions, deletions or changes</b>	
<p>I would add strengthen inter-institutional coordination. That each actor is clearly identified.</p> <p>Regarding relationships for future collaboration, here it would be at the institutional level. Relationships for inter-institutional collaboration.</p> <p>I think that there could be another result...the desired result could be working in a team, among all of the sectors. In the end these four generate a greater result, which would be working in a team. It's another achievement.</p> <p>Maybe it is worth expanding, grounding it more on building trust for the development of specific interventions, translated into places, programs and projects.</p>	

Table 15. Comments about result 3: Clear to all participants that all decisions are competent and were made in the common interest

<b>Quotes from interviews indicating...</b>	
<b>Agreement with and expressed need for this desired result:</b>	<b>Disagreement with or expressed lack of need for this desired result</b>
<p>About the common interest...yes. Also it is important to keep in mind that there are always going to be people who do not agree with everything, right. So you have to understand what they are thinking...that they are not dogmatic, mine is the absolute truth...we have lost a lot with this.</p>	

Table 15 (Continued)

<p>That the decisions were made based on the common interest, that would be try to focus on finding the priority needs at the community level. That we can focus on the community needs.</p>	
<p><b>Quotes from interviews indicating suggested additions, deletions or changes</b></p>	
<p>Where it says 'all decisions are competent' it should say 'logical and relevant.'</p> <p>In addition to that they were competent and based on the common interest...that whatever comes out in the end is a decision of this group. I mean it's not that I or that you, no. We decided that. And afterwards I can't complain to you, nor you to me, because we decided that together. I think that maybe it's here...I think that it should be made more explicit. Because I can see that a decision was competent, but I might not necessarily agree. So maybe put that if there is a result of a good process I feel that the decision was mine and also everyone else's. I mean, that it was our decision, and not mine nor yours.</p>	

Table 16. Comments about result 4: Decisions resulting from the process influence policy

<p><b>Quotes from interviews indicating...</b></p>	
<p><b>Agreement with and expressed need for this desired result:</b></p>	<p><b>Disagreement with or expressed lack of need for this desired result</b></p>
<p>I see that above all this is the most important, and it is the most difficult.</p> <p>I see that above all this is the most important...but this type of result is the most difficult, to influence policy. If you as a participant see that your contributions and your participation are leading to this, it gives you confidence.</p> <p>I think that it is hard to know sometimes what public policy is. That it will be applied how you would like it to be, a series of dreams that one would like to see made reality. But this does not guarantee that it will be applied, this is a big problem...Will, it is a lot of will. Influence the action, implementation, application.</p> <p>But especially we are talking about a dialogue about public policy, because if it is a dialogue just to talk, it doesn't make sense because the problem is too serious.</p> <p>I think that this last one is maybe [the most important], that there is follow-up action, and learning for team work.</p>	

Table 16 (Continued)

<b>Quotes from interviews indicating suggested additions, deletions or changes</b>	
<p>I would add in this last one that the decisions result in community organization.</p> <p>I would change this to 'achieve policy' o 'reach policy'</p> <p>I would put in this last one 'public policy.'</p> <p>Maybe here it could be 'Contribute to the fulfillment of policy.' It really contributes to policy, reaches policy, it is something that is really achieved. You could say that this requires a real political plan that is translated into resources, follow-up, achievement and accountability.</p> <p>I'm not sure about this last one, that the decisions influence policy. I think the decisions are public policy decisions. I see it more as a circle, less unidirectional, I see it more like this.</p> <p>There also has to be a product that stays with the peoples, because we don't return the information to the people. We take information, but we never return it to the people...</p> <p>We have thousands of agreements about 20 issues in the last 12 years in the Peace Accords, but they are not fulfilled because there is no budget. Without a budget we don't do anything.</p>	

Table 17. (Extended Table 4) Why is a 'good' process important?

<b>Emergent themes</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
Achieve objectives	<p>That actions are truly carried out...achieve what is planned. If not, I think we will never get to implementation. All of the levels are important, but the central level is more political, more strategic. The action would be at the local level. There has to really be an impact. Without action, nothing is achieved, even though at the political level decisions have been made and plans established. It's about trying to link the action and the implementation to everything else.</p>
Meet community needs	<p>Because people at the community level know the problems. In order to see that the decisions made are going to support the community. If everything stays at the higher level, people might not support these decisions, because they don't really address the needs of the community. But rather they are what those in charge think are their needs, but they are not connected with what happens at the community level.</p> <p>The final goal is to reduce food insecurity. This is the overall goal of the process. Institutions are a great support, but decision making has to be primarily focused on the beneficiaries of food security programs and projects. This is the role of good decision making. Because in the end decisions are made in order to benefit or ignore the families who are affected by hunger. It is also important that we are focused in our decision making...For one thing resources in Guatemala are not unlimited, they are very limited, but obviously we have to make decisions that allow us to focus on the social groups who are most affected.</p>

Table 17 (Continued)

<p>Define roles and responsibilities for inter-institutional coordination</p>	<p>Awareness is needed, that the decisions are government policy. And advocacy of roles, how each one of us contributes.</p> <p>There hasn't been a good administration of these processes. It began with the law, but roles have not been defined, who is going to lead this process. Everyone wants to do their own thing, and in the end we do nothing. And this is why nothing works, that everything is short-term focused. And everything remains unfinished after four years. There is no consistency in these processes.</p> <p>There is a lot of malnutrition and poverty in Guatemala. If these processes had continuity, and if we achieved what is written in the law, we could move forward. Everything that was achieved in the past four years, now we repeat it again. Because there is no clear direction, who leads these processes. SESAN exists, but they don't do well because their function is diluted in the ministry of health and the secretariat of social work. There is nobody to coordinate, to advise, to drive these processes.</p>
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Table 18. (Extended Table 5) What is the importance of participating in a 'good' process with these elements, not just any process?

Emergent themes	Quotes from interviews
<p>Involve actors and improve representation</p>	<p>Involve the right people the right way, and transparency and accountability are the most important. I think that if this is not achieved, the process is not necessarily representative. If you achieve these things then you assure that the process is representative, of your sector, your area or field.</p>
<p>Build leadership</p>	<p>The importance of all of this is developing leadership and focusing on leadership so that all of this can move forward. With these principles, we would achieve the objectives.</p>
<p>Create dialogue</p>	<p>Basically it is...if one sees the multiculturalism of our problem, as long as there is no dialogue, we cannot improve the problem. With only talking about it, nothing is going to improve, but without talking we cannot do anything.</p>
<p>Make valuable contributions</p>	<p>First because I think, personally, that I would like to contribute to these processes, in the actions, the operational part. I would like to be a part of, and not just an observer. I think that it is worth it because a lot of time has passed and we still have not resolved these problems.</p> <p>In this case it is to help find solutions to the big problem that we have in this country, in order to help this. The motivation comes from making a positive contribution to the problem of food insecurity.</p> <p>Not only because it is a good process, but because I am involved in it, like it and am interested in it.</p>

Table 18 (Continued)

	<p>I think that I could contribute important things to the process. I would love to be able to do this. I was very close to the process of developing the Law, the Policy, the Regulations and the Strategic Plan and I saw how it was a bit twisted, so I know where there are weaknesses and I could help to reduce the time that it would take to achieve what is missing in this country.</p> <p>Because I would be sure that my efforts and my contributions are going to have an impact, and that it is not just a tiring and frustrating process....we often end up frustrated because we do not manage to overcome the challenges and results are not visible anywhere, so...to find something that really allows us to see that what we do is really going to be good for the country.</p>
Reach consensus	<p>Basically because it would mean organizing the process and strengthening the ability to reach consensus for actions. I think that this would be interesting.</p>
Build trust and commitment	<p>In order to deliver and truly work towards the reduction of food insecurity in Guatemala in all the communities, this requires a certain type of trust. If there is no trust people do not consider working together...I think that we need more sustainable processes and more effective commitment on the part of different actors that are in the community. So we can maybe break down this barrier that often exists in many organizations at different levels. The work is done at the central level and there is no communication outside of this level.</p> <p>So it ends with interventions that serve the population and that they are sustainable.</p>
Improve coordination	<p>To achieve coordination, and not duplicate efforts. Not only because of the economic inefficiency, but also because if there are different initiatives carried out, they eliminate each other.</p>
Achieve objectives, meet community needs	<p>Because I think that there are a lot of people that have not been able to find a good way to do things...And these processes have to have charm. If you are a professor, your intentions are not to hurt the students.</p> <p>So that it really leads to something.</p> <p>It is noticeable how things are not achieved and that we need to achieve them. I am sure that there is still a lot to do.</p> <p>So we end up with sustainable interventions that serve the populations needs.</p>

Table 19. (Extended Table 6) What process elements are needed to achieve these results?

<b>Emergent themes</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
<p><b>Participation, dialogue and clear rules for decision-making</b></p>	<p>It has to be very participatory, with a lot of dialogue, coordination among all of the actors.</p> <p>For me it is very important that there is more participation.</p> <p>Different people have to be involved. It has to be very participatory, different sectors, different people.</p> <p>...a good participation in the dialogue. Many times we leave participants to one side because we leave the participation to those who have the most complaints. We don't give this space to the rest of the population.</p> <p>Good communication channels are important.</p> <p>...help the people express themselves, transform their expressions into institutional documents. The people in the rural areas have excellent ideas and they need to be transformed into institutional language. There should always be someone with technical training to help them, if not, it doesn't happen.</p> <p>I think that those responsible for decision making need to be involved together so that collective, not individual actions are taken. Because individual actions only hinder other actions. There has to be global planning with everyone involved.</p> <p>Clear rules. Build trust with clear rules. The truth as a principle that generates trust.</p>
<p><b>Participants with knowledge &amp; decision-making power</b></p>	<p>There has to be a good understanding of the mission for those who are going to be involved in the process, in order to see whether or not they fit in the process, if they belong there or not. Not only by institution... It has to be somebody who is working in these issues, with prior knowledge in order to know who are the actors that should be involved.</p> <p>There should be a technical group...what happens is that in the political part they discuss technical issues that they shouldn't be discussing there. But they go there and make decisions. But the problem is that make decisions about what.</p> <p>Speaking of the people that participate...they should be those with the capacity to decide, to have an opinion. It is common that someone says 'I am only representing so-and-so' but I can't speak for that person, I can't share my opinion. They come more as observers to go back and report what happened, but this is set back. It takes a lot of time. This is something that needs to be established. We can't be on the same point for more than 2 months.</p>

Table 19 (Continued)

<p><b>Clear, shared objectives</b></p>	<p>It's about clearly understanding the objectives of each person to try to work together.</p> <p>I see that in the first place it has to begin with a proposal.</p> <p>The purpose, goals, expected objectives, results that we want to reach have to be clear.</p> <p>It should come from the national agenda...The problem is that we always start over again, once again from zero, and we invent everything all over again, and we already have this going, we already have this on the agenda. There are so many shared agendas everywhere, but why don't you take the national agenda to orient the actions...</p> <p>Transparency, search for a common objective, a real goal to move towards.</p>
<p><b>Clear procedure, provision of information &amp; planning prior to process</b></p>	<p>Establish principles, procedures and times. These three things are fundamental. If we do not have principles, procedures and times, it turns into an eternal debate and we don't ever finish.</p> <p>As a process it has to be planned, with many stages.</p> <p>First there has to be good planning, before the process.</p> <p>...logic, an organized and systematic process.</p> <p>Because the government has this vision of civil society as antagonistic, even though the idea or proposal of civil society is really good, the government is not going to accept it. There has to be a search for a different dynamic to propose and vote. It's obvious that if the vice president raises his hand in favor, all the ministers raise their hands in favor, even though civil society won.</p> <p>Beforehand it needs be known what has been done on the area that I am working in. This is part of the prior analysis. Sometimes it is so long, they spend a lot of time preparing the materials and nothing comes of it.</p> <p>Expect and rely on information. More must be known about what is going to be discussed in the process.</p>
<p><b>Leadership &amp; credibility to build trust</b></p>	<p>Definitely whoever convenes the actors should have leadership and credibility. And that everyone trusts them. For me this is very important.</p> <p>Good leadership, someone who has clarity on the subject at hand and how the State works and the other institutions too that don't necessarily have to do with the government...Once the head has this clarity, communication can be organized and the other weak aspects improved.</p>

Table 19 (Continued)

<p><b>Documentation and Sustainability of process</b></p>	<p>It should not be measured as a government activity; this is the problem with this and other issues in Guatemala. When the next government comes along, what is part of the past government is not supported and new activities are considered without taking into account what things from the past government can be used. This has to be a national initiative, so we do not go backwards every time we change governments every four years.</p> <p>But the other part of the systematization, which is where we often fall short, I think that this part has to be that one is documenting, and there could be a written report afterwards that can be revisited later to see how we are doing.</p>
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Table 20. (Extended Table 7) Overall reactions & suggested changes to the five principles of a ‘good’ process

<p><b>Quotes from interviews indicating...</b></p>	
<p><b>Agreement with and expressed need for these principles:</b></p>	<p><b>Disagreement with or expressed lack of need for these principles</b></p>
<p>In a few words you have it, first the people. With credibility and trust. How I can involve them in the most participatory way. How I am going to proceed, what I am going to do, so there is a common interest. I think that the rest, if there were anything else, would be in form not in substance. There might be other little things, but the most essential are here.</p> <p>It looks good to me.</p> <p>I agree that these principles apply not only to nutrition, but really are principles that have to be considered elsewhere. I think that all of these fit with a good decision making process.</p> <p>Yes, of course...this is a good process.</p> <p>Yes, I think these are good principles.</p> <p>It looks good to me. These five as the fundamental principles, if one were missing, it wouldn't work.</p> <p>Yes, these are elements of a good process.</p> <p>I think that you touched on the most important points. I don't think I can add anything else because you were very precise and this is what we want to achieve. It looks good to me.</p>	<p>It must be understood that Guatemala is a society that has a diversity of cultures and ethnic groups that have their own forms of organizing themselves...We need to be very respectful of these forms and not impose our own forms...</p>

Table 20 (Continued)

<b>Suggested additions, deletions or changes</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews indicating these</b>
<p><b>Make more specific to the SAN context; too general &amp; abstract</b></p>	<p>I do think that it is very general, it is not focused specifically on FNS...It looks really good to me in terms of some things, but it does not related specifically to FNS. This applies to many processes and it would be good to ground it more in the FNS context.</p> <p>Very general. Very abstract for my way of seeing things. I think about what come before and after this. Before there needs to be leadership. And after there needs to be thought about where these decisions are going, a systematization.</p>
<p><b>Add/emphasize follow-up on actions, evaluation and financial resources</b></p>	<p>The most important that I see is transparency and resources management. I would just add a sixth principle that would be evaluation and follow-up of the actions that result from this. Periodically evaluate the actions that were proposed.</p> <p>Maybe what is missing is that there is a follow-up. Evaluation of the process, how did it end, what happened. That there is feedback. To know what is happening...it's like a reminder of what we committed to. Because we commit, but we don't fulfill.</p> <p>Another important thing is that there is a budget. Many times we don't do anything because there is no money. The policy has to be implemented with a budget so that things will work.</p> <p>That results are achieved. That people see results in the process. That they are seeing what they are measuring. That there is a good dynamic among those involved, and we support each other, and don't hide information.</p> <p>Politics is a science, but it is also an art, right. And the art of politics is to convert each agreement into concrete results, but the problem with Latin-Americans is that we make great theoretical designs, but we never establish the how, the when or the who. We always agree on the what, what we are going to do and we write documents...But things are never implemented, they remain in documents...I think that a balance has to be found to so we don't fall into a focus that is too simplistic, but we also don't wait until we have the perfect design to start acting. This is the solution that I have found in practice...I mean, we already agreed with one point, ok, lets specify it, how much money are you going to put, how are we going to do it, and who, ok. So there are people that stay working on this and we move onto the second.</p> <p>I would say that the incentive to feel results every day, to feel a satisfaction, that the process has an element of satisfaction.</p>

Table 20 (Continued)

<p><b>Add respect among participants</b></p>	<p>Maybe I would add respect as a principle. Respect the spaces where each of the members have participated. That the fact that something is from civil society does not mean that it is of greater or less importance...It's about spaces more than people. For example, if I am from civil society, but its' not about me, it's about the space for civil society...It's not about the dynamic of meetings, but about the whole process and respecting spaces. ..The issue here is the quality of participation of the members...CONASAN should try to create more relations among members...Because we all know that at the level of Ministers of Health and Education, but they don't know what civil society does, so it doesn't matter to them. It's about both parts knowing each other.</p>
<p><b>Transparency as a transversal element</b></p>	<p>This [transparency and accountability] should be something transversal. Because public policy is never linear, it is never going to be a process where everyone is going to be there because they like it, because they want to collaborate, because they have trust, no, it is a great struggle with interests at stake. So you cannot think of it as something linear...It is a game of chess where everyone is seeing where they can position, the queen here, what is going to happen. Public policy is not something that one can organize how they wish. And the movement of the actors does not depend on one. One can have the actions clear, well-thought out, but if the actors do not agree, everything falls apart...</p>
<p><b>Win-win; everyone feels they are winning/gaining</b></p>	<p>There is something else...that everyone involved are winning...It's about win-win. In negotiation one can won and the other can lose. One has to have more weight o more power, that everyone is valuable. A good process would be where all of the actors have the sensation that they are winning.</p>

Table 21. What does “Involve the ‘right’ people” mean in this context?

<p><b>Emergent themes</b></p>	<p><b>Quotes from interviews</b></p>
<p><b>Multidisciplinary, multisectoral, multiple actors</b></p>	<p>That the group is multi-disciplinary.</p> <p>It means that all of the actors have to be involved, civil society, the government, the communities. And it requires that the people are really committed in these processes. Sometimes at the political level and higher, people are appointed who are not really committed, so it doesn't work...The right group has to be there, and that they are truly committed. Committed to improve, that things will really work. There must be an entity that can coordinate, which is very important in this process. Civil society and the communities, parents of families, and the municipalities, they have to be involved in this. At the local level they have to be inside these processes.</p>

Table 21 (Continued)

	<p>I would say this depends on the politicians. They make the decisions for the implementation of actions. The technical people are the ones who design the interventions and civil society is those who live the situation. These would be the right people. Currently there is more participation in the technical aspects and what's missing is participation of politicians and civil society.</p> <p>Sometimes they are not technical people, but they are the right people. So 'right' depends on the situation.</p> <p>'Right' would be that the technical people are there, but also the political...and the multi-disciplinary, at the technical level because they know the problem. And at the political level because there is where the final decisions are made, those that lead to actions. It can't be technical alone or political alone, nor only those that know the problem. Everyone has to be involved. So what needs to be done is assure that everyone participates.</p> <p>I think that the technical level should participate, and the political level, in the sense that they make the decisions and make sure there are resources so it is really done.</p> <p>Representation of the sectors. Participation of everyone that has to do with the problem and the solution. Civil society, the public sector, the government and CONASAN.</p> <p>It could be seen that in Guatemala there are distinct levels. There is the political level with the mandate, and then each level or group should be represented.</p> <p>I understand it as a hierarchy. There are those on top, and until you reach the beneficiaries. SESAN with its actions plans, then INCOPAS and CONASAN. Each one has its plans defined and the right people are in this.</p>
<p><b>Representation &amp; voice</b></p>	<p>First that there is representation. It is not true that is they are there at the table making decisions that everyone is represented. Many times the people are there at the table, but there is no process. There needs to be a balance so that the right person comes and has their own voice.</p> <p>Obviously the population has to be represented. There should be leaders and the law provides mechanisms for the participation of civil society, the church, women, indigenous groups.</p> <p>The word 'right' doesn't settle well with me. I think that 'right' depends on for what, for what...to me this phrase is very ambiguous, it doesn't tell me...'right' for what?...For me everyone would be involved, so this idea of involving the 'right' people doesn't settle well with me...How can one put all of the 'right' people. One has to put all of the actors from all of the sectors...I think that everyone would have to be there.</p>

Table 21 (Continued)

	<p>Unfortunately everyone can't be there or else we would never reach agreements and move forward.</p> <p>In the specific case of INCOPAS this is something that could be seen there. Supposedly they are representative of civil society, but the relationship between them and civil society is very weak. So it is precisely about involving people, but so that they are the right people they should fulfill these requirements. These concepts would have to be considered.</p>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<p>That they have absolute knowledge of the problem in Guatemala.</p> <p>That they have the knowledge, they know the issues. Also it could be that they are there politically, but also have the adequate knowledge.</p> <p>That they know the issues.</p> <p>Universities should play a stronger role, educational institutions.</p> <p>It means involve the key actor, those with knowledge...It means to be able to have clarity as to where we are going.</p>
<b>Experience, interest, and opinions</b>	<p>Credibility is very important for me...that one has experience in this field...this allows me to trust, this is good for the process.</p> <p>Instead I would put actors interested and who has experience in the issues on the agenda, because it depends what is on the agenda...The actors are chosen based on criteria of trust, basically political and advisory...but if the criteria is representation one could be my advisor y could be very representative of civil society, but I don't have political trust. So the person is there and is my advisor, but since I don't have political trust, the representation doesn't matter.</p> <p>That they are really going to have opinions and contribute something positive to all of this. In this sense this does not necessarily mean including everyone who is currently working in this area.</p> <p>Why do I give my time for free? Because it has to do with my interests, common and shared, in this group agenda.</p> <p>There are many people who are experts or who could contribute a lot, but are not necessarily inside the institutions. This is my point. I think that upon convening the people those who are interested should be invited...by looking for and asking for those who consider or believe that they could contribute information and that are not directly associated with or working in the institutions.</p>
<b>Affected by problems at hand- civil society, communities, families</b>	<p>The right people are those that should have a say in the issue and that could be affected by the decisions.</p>

Table 21 (Continued)

	<p>And there should be participation in the places themselves, because there is where the problem is.</p> <p>There are people who know the issues and the theoretical part, and people who know the issues because they suffer the problem. This allows for the process to have a solid base but at the same time is not in the clouds, it is grounded in reality and the real needs of the population.</p>
<p><b>Professional position &amp; decision-making capacity</b></p>	<p>When we talk about right, to me this does not refer to people that have the intellectual capacity. Because there might be people who are right, but are stupid, stubborn, etc. But they are in a professional position that makes them key people, and we have to work with them.</p> <p>Upon convening there is going to be someone sitting there in the seat that is assigned for the person who manages or directs food security, but it is not necessarily the person who knows the most o who is the most right for this. So, the position or office that people hold does not necessarily mean that they are the right people. This is my point...I think this should be open to include not only the people who are currently working in the institutions. It could be someone who works in the private sector, but is a person with a lot of capacity for these decisions. It is important that the right people are looked for.</p> <p>That the issues are discussed...that they are people who can make decisions, so it passes on to another stage.</p>
<p><b>Present proposals, not just complaints</b></p>	<p>That they make proposals about the issues, not just complaints.</p> <p>Involve the people that have proposals, not just complaints. People have more complaints than proposals. It is important that the people have complaints, but more important that they have proposals...From the social sectors, economic sectors, private sectors, from all of the sectors. There are people that have proposals, but they are not visible. Because they are made invisible by the people who have complaints.</p>
<p><b>Involve the people according to the agenda</b></p>	<p>The problem is that these processes are always done backwards. First they look for the people and then they adjust everything that is to be done to these people. First one has to set the ideal and have a defined structure based on this decide who is needed to achieve this. But many times it is done backwards. First they find the people, then they adjust them within the structure.</p> <p>For me the most important is that it is clear what I am going for, that it is clear to the people who are going to manage this. If this is clear, I am going to see who I am going to involve, how I am going to involve them.</p>

Table 21 (Continued)

<p><b>Who should decide who the right people are?</b></p>	<p>I don't know who can decide who is right. I think that maybe a forum, I mean, if it is a FNS issue, for example, if the spaces that exist by law would have worked, one could discuss this proposal there. The problem is that, for example, all of civil society is not there. And since often when these things are laws they are exclusive, because they cannot be groups larger than 100 people. So representatives have to be selected and the form of doing this is democratic.</p> <p>The government, SESAN, should do this. The law establishes the coordination, but the connection is not strictly speaking part of the mandate. This leading of actions is not automatic, it is not a switch. This is why it rests on this desired result of generating greater awareness. This is the key to articulate the mandates that are in the law.</p>
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Table 22. What does “Involve people the ‘right’ way” mean in this context?

<p><b>Emergent themes</b></p>	<p><b>Quotes from interviews</b></p>
<p><b>Open dialogue and clear communication between actors/levels</b></p>	<p>That there is a lot of dialogue among all of the actors involved.</p> <p>That the dialogue is open. Here there is still a certain amount of repression or fear to say some things because you don't know what the other persons' reaction will be. They might be even assumptions and that the other person is not even thinking about it, but for historical factors the speaker thinks like this. This is an aspect that has to be taken into consideration.</p> <p>For the same reason that there are levels, not to try to make the technical people tell the political people what to say, or vice versa because sometimes that is where there are conflicts. So at the political level we should try to be highly aware, understand the issues at hand and this could help the technical level. So they can say that yes we support you and then find resources. But the technical level would have to be in the middle, trying to influence the political level in decision making, but also understanding the part from the affected group so that they are well-represented or someone can speak for the people affected by the problems.</p>
<p><b>Democratic, genuine participation throughout entire process</b></p>	<p>That political and partisan things are set aside. Partisan politics must be left out and based on experience in a democratic way, on knowledge and the lives of the people and the people who can be involved in order to resolve the problem.</p> <p>I think that it means very democratically and that they participate in the process. And it has to be an open participation. Not only those who are always there, right, like World Food Program and the International Development Bank. Even civil society. We always talk about civil society, but how do you do this? How can you make it so they are listened to and that they participate genuinely?</p>

Table 22 (Continued)

	<p>That the people participate in the planning, programming, implementation and evaluation processes. In many cases participation is from those who implement the program or project. And this is utilitarian participation. When there is the chance to have participation in the planning, implementation, evaluation, I think that the participants feel like they own the process. And this creates commitment.</p> <p>I think that the right way includes everything starting from the way you do the convening. Many times the people do not get involved because they are not convinced about the way that they are going to participate in the process, or what is the role that has been assigned to them. Because many times they see that they are more there because someone wants to be able to say that this particular sector was involved, but not because they really have a defined role or because they know how they are going to contribute to the process. This is something that must be taken into account from the beginning of the convening phase.</p>
<p><b>Voice and involvement in decision-making</b></p>	<p>There are many actors who are making decisions based on consensus because they put a lot of people at the table. But they have it that way for appearance, not to take them into account in the decision making.</p> <p>That participation is active. That people have a voice. To have a voice means that you participate in the decision making, you have the right to talk and to make decisions...It is not the right way if you invite people to talk, but you don't take them into account...To have a voice means that you have the right to talk, but you also have the right to participate in the decision making.</p> <p>That they have a voice.</p>
<p><b>Respect for values and differences</b></p>	<p>A motivational process based on values, not according to personal interests, more like a social interest or an interest considering other human beings that live here and who have food security problems...I think that this is the way to give a bit more objectivity. Because when it comes time to involve, I get involved in an objective way, trying to find a common good more than trying to find something personal.</p> <p>We have a cultural richness with different ethnic groups...I cannot assume that what is good for me is good the other person or in the same way. I have to use mechanisms that are also good for them, because they have different concepts of what is good.</p>
<p><b>Achieving consensus</b></p>	<p>That there is consensus. That there is consensus and that the Development Councils at the local level are involved because they are the ones who make decisions at the local level.</p> <p>I think that this is particularly based on consensus, on finding consensus. We have a very derogatory way of treating people that do not think like us, but we have to think about why. The design helps achieve consensus.</p>

Table 22 (Continued)

<p><b>Unaligned and unbiased facilitator</b></p>	<p>That the facilitator is unbiased...Yes, of course, [it is possible to use an external facilitator who the people can trust], but it depends on who places him/her there. The facilitator is generally placed by those who participate.</p>
<p><b>Political will &amp; true commitment</b></p>	<p>All of these ideas are political. They clash a bit with one element, which is political will. All of the dialogue and all of the participation processes in Guatemala have clashed with the lack of political will. Maybe the State should try to establish true points of trust upon which we can advance, but it is not a problem with design, it is a problem with political will. This is the point. The system is designed, and it clashes with a problem that we call political will...Everything that can be built have already been built in previous governments. The problem is political will. Everything is reduced to whether or not there is political will. This is the political reality.</p> <p>The people in the government remain unknowledgeable. There needs to be more political will.</p> <p>I can fake the right way. Oh, the poor people, the kids, but I don't feel. The rhetoric. A lot of people who are involved and are doing very important jobs, but they don't care about the problem. One is working to earn a salary. I don't know how to resolve this problem. For me this is a very serious problem. And unfortunately those with the power are those who decide.</p>

Table 23. What does “Clear, organized procedure and objective” mean in this context?

<p><b>Emergent themes</b></p>	<p><b>Quotes from interviews</b></p>
<p><b>Participation and group function (dialogue, facilitation, conflict management)</b></p>	<p>The way that people are involved in dialogue and coordination.</p> <p>Maybe it could be ‘operation’ of the group, how we are going to work together. Yes, it could be like an operations manual, or that each one’s role is clearly defined, made explicit.</p> <p>This is extremely important. Because there were so many problems, because in CONASAN the procedures were not clear.</p> <p>I think that, yes, it is important to have an external person who does not bias the process because here there is a tendency for some sectors to be more biased than others and this does not allow the weakest sectors to express themselves in the best way. Or in the end they don’t speak because their comments are not going to have the same validity or weight as others.</p> <p>How we are going to manage conflicts, how they will be resolved...Because if you wait until the conflict is already there, it is guaranteed that not everyone will agree on how to resolve it. But if this is defined beforehand, you know that it will be like so because I said it would be like this.</p>

Table 23 (Continued)

<p><b>Planning &amp; leadership</b></p>	<p>The legislation was participatory, with groups from civil society, indigenous groups and also the private sector. That everyone is taken into account. So you can say that it was thought through clearly.</p> <p>That the people understand exactly what they are going to do.</p> <p>Who takes the leadership. This is a step prior to achieving consensus, who takes the leadership to promote the process.</p>
<p><b>Clear, shared objectives and strategic plans</b></p>	<p>This is fundamental. If I am going to carry out a process, what I want from this process is to reach certain products or these results. And it can be organized so that it will be successful. For me it has to be very clear what the expected achievements are.</p> <p>I would put that it is simple. If you have various objectives, although they are very clear, you will not achieve them. I think that the way to do things is little by little. This is important in this case. It has to do with them being clear, but it's not the same.</p> <p>The objectives are shared by everyone, they can be achieved.</p> <p>If there are clear procedures, there is no loss. Unfortunately these procedures are not clear and they are not defined. Nobody knows where we want to get because there is no strategic plan. There are no strategic plans that really result in improving the procedures and much less to achieve the objectives.</p> <p>Basically it's the Strategic Plan. It says what we are going to do.</p>
<p><b>Agenda and time frame established and respected</b></p>	<p>For example, for meetings that are held, an agenda is shared and the timing is established.</p> <p>It means not having political agendas.</p> <p>There is a process, right, to define the steps to make a decision, to have a public policy. Now in many cases the processes are not carried out as technically planned. Maybe what happens is that the processes, or the problems, become part of the political agenda. So they are converted into situations where there is pressure and a response must be given. So, I think that the right way is that these 7-9 steps that lead to action to resolve a problem must be placed on the political agenda and show results, organized by the government. This is a process that generally does not occur with these steps.</p> <p>And another thing is the part about discipline. I think that we as a society have problems with this. We have a joke about 'Guatemalan time.' Sometimes the processes are even longer because of the delays in meetings or events or in the fulfillment of responsibilities, and there are no products. Many times people do not want to keep going in circles about something that is not going anywhere. Many initiatives have been abandoned like this.</p>

Table 23 (Continued)

<p><b>Clear norms and rules</b></p>	<p>These are norms of the process, among all the actors, at the national, departmental and municipal levels. The actors change by these levels. The norms come from the law itself.</p> <p>It means not to have hidden rules.</p> <p>I think that this is vital, if not...There are always going to be people with greater ability to talk in public and be understood. And there are people who might have really good ideas, but in reality they are more reserved. So there must be these norms for behavior and participation, maybe it is right, they allow people to participate when they want to contribute something, ideas for the process. It is very important to make them see that any idea might be useful and not only the ideas of those who yell the most will be taken into account...In reality I think that this is vital, because in reality like this the people can know what they can expect, and what they can' expect, because they should believe that they are showing up so they can participate. Everyone wants to come up with the idea that is really what people think, or what they need. I think that this is basic, in order to define what these mechanisms are going to be and the norms for group interaction.</p>
<p><b>Clear roles and responsibilities</b></p>	<p>In the process the stages or steps have to be clear, but that everyone knows what each person is going to do, how they are going to do it, when they are going to do it, and with what. Sometimes a process it carried out, but nobody knows who is responsible...it is important that there is clarity about what is going to be done, by who, and how...sometimes people say that a certain activity is the job of a certain person or a certain sector, but if there is clarity in this, it isn't confused. Mainly due to the variety of actors and sectors there are, it is important to have clear who is going to do what.</p> <p>Establish that we all have a voice in decision making.</p>
<p><b>Consensus</b></p>	<p>Build consensus, these points of consensus, dialogues that should exist among all the actors have to be involved in these processes.</p> <p>It means that through the process we have to arrive at a consensus as to what we are going to do.</p>
<p><b>Documentation and monitoring &amp; evaluation of the process</b></p>	<p>We need to systematize all of these experiences. If this systematization does not exist, is the results are not made known, if there is not a clear objective as to where we want to go, and it is not made known, it all stays on paper. If the right people are there, all of the actors and all of the good procedures towards this objective and we achieve this systematization and make it known among all of the actors, I think that, things can improve.</p> <p>To have a procedure to see how we are advancing. The part of follow-up, monitoring and evaluation. If everyone is doing what was anticipated, something is not working. Because if one piece is not working, the whole process fails. But if we don't manage to detect where the problem is, we will never see results.</p>

Table 24. What does “Focus on finding and serving the common interest” mean in this context?

<b>Emergent themes</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
<p><b>Awareness of problem and prioritization of community needs</b></p>	<p>I think that it has a lot to do with the rationality of the intervention. If it is understood as an important public problem.</p> <p>That the majority doesn't win, but rather the needs of the communities are met.</p> <p>Actions that benefit the community should be carried out, those that favor the people, not just the politicians.</p> <p>In the FNS field we are not working to benefit neither me nor you. We are working for someone else who is outside of this group, in a sense. It might be the interest of the people or the country, or of the region or the indigenous population.</p> <p>The other aspect is that yes it is focused on the areas where the damage is greatest. The social aspect and also the biological aspect, who is biologically at the greatest risk, we have the focus where poverty is greatest. This has to do with selecting the population that is going to benefit with the type of problem that is going to be resolved and with the quality of the response. The response must be of the same magnitude as the problem presents.</p> <p>There should be focus on the common interest, but prioritized to those who are in a critical situation. Everyone has rights, but there are some who are worse off than others. So we start with who is worse...It is our duty to prioritize people so that children do not die... it is true that nutrition and food is for everyone, but in this case in countries with such a high rate of malnutrition and mortality those at greatest risk must be prioritized...All of this should be managed so it is clear what each person is capable of perceiving or contributing for the common good.</p>
<p><b>Limit individual interests, political interests and corruption</b></p>	<p>That the process is absolutely democratic. The common interest is more valuable than individual interests.</p> <p>Sometimes personal interests or political interests prevail, but not really the interest of the whole population, in this case especially those of children 0-5 years old. And for this to occur the right people who are truly committed have to be involved. So that the interest of the population prevails over everything else, over the political interests. Because often in these spaces, these coordination efforts, the government or political interests prevail, and the common interest does not prevail.</p>

Table 24 (Continued)

	<p>This is the most difficult. We all want a prosperous, developed Guatemala. The problem is that we don't all do what we say, but people lie to protect their individual interests. There is where the problem starts. So the common interest is not stronger than the individual interest. The minimum effort with maximum results is favored. Actions that generate the most monetary resources are favored...the search for principles and values, it is more about monetary interest. And it is fair because undoubtedly this is a society that it very harassed by hidden interests within an organized structure, bound by illegal actions, criminal actions. So the search for these interests has to do with a lot of money, I mean whoever has the money is an important person. The success of Guatemala is associated with money, it is not associated with values, principles or with participation.</p> <p>Collective leadership is one of the most difficult goals to achieve in our society...Due to the cultures that we have...corruption is something that prevails and makes this difficult.</p> <p>Everyone has their own interests. I could say that I'm not interested in this, but the people give us the common interest. There has to be a focus on the common interest of the people. But the ways to get there might be different.</p> <p>When we talk about common interest there is always a moment when the individual good is restricted or limited according to the perception of the people. I think that this is very important.</p> <p>The problem with the diversity of the Guatemalan is very important. It is very easy to start conflicts when there are many cultures that are so different.</p>
<p><b>Common objective, common agenda and consensus for inter-institutional coordination</b></p>	<p>It means that all of the sectors come to see that the objective to reduce malnutrition and improve food security is the objective of everyone. Because if not, the health sector sees one interest and one objective, the agriculture sector sees another, and the economic sector sees yet another, and in the end we are lost. So this is to make sure that the objectives are really going to be achieved. Because if everyone has their own interests, then we are not going to get anywhere. We have to have this in common so that everyone can focus on this so that there really is an impact. If not, no impact will be seen...to take this issue and find a common objective it cannot be done with each sector doing its own thing. Here is where SESAN has a crucial role. If it fails, the whole process will fail. SESAN has to be the one to propose these goals, make them known, see that everyone feels identified with this goal to really achieve it.</p>

Table 24 (Continued)

	<p>I think that the legal framework is clear...nobody criticized the policy, it was really good. It is clear that civil society wants, and that we all want that there are fewer malnourished children and that they have a better quality of life. I think that this is there in the actions, and it's there in the understanding of where we are moving towards. This is clear. The problem is in the how to get where we are going. But if I am doing the same thing as somebody else, and we are not communicating to do it together, each one is using a different methodology, different ways of doing the same thing. Maybe everyone is doing something, but all of the actions are not being done. This is what has to improve. Consensus-based actions must be prioritized. And this is not done. In order to have a common interest, there have to be processes for consensus and prioritization.</p> <p>Regarding consensus, sometimes it is not going to be achieved, the good of the majority is going to prevail over the individual even without consensus because in this case with FNS not necessarily everyone is going to agree. I think that the majority agrees, so there shouldn't be limitations so this doesn't happen. The great majority agree. Caution must be taken with this idea of a consensus because there is not going to be a consensus.</p> <p>An agenda that reflects the common interest of those who are involved should be the first point. And based on this common agenda...because this is the problem in many places, that people never agree. And we always agree on what needs to be done as a result...I think that this, for me, would be the first element...A common agenda is important within a process.</p>
<p><b>Organized, continuous, long-term process</b></p>	<p>Continuity and follow-up is missing in this country, the people who are coordinating change positions. There is no continuity in processes initiated because financial and human resources are lost. Everything that has been invested is lost.</p> <p>Definitely, it is possible [to reach the common interest], but within an organized process.</p> <p>I think that this can be achieved [define the common interest, and that everyone contributes to this]. These are very long-term processes because a lot of mentalities have to change, people need to be committed, to working for this country and for the children that are so in need.</p>
<p><b>Satisfaction with participation, contributions and process</b></p>	<p>That the common interest that satisfies is found. That people feel happy and proud.</p> <p>I think that this means that everyone who participates in this process has to be content that they participated, that they contributed. I mean, ok, I participated, I had the opportunity to express my opinions and share my experiences, I was taken into account, and it was beneficial for everyone.</p>

Table 24 (Continued)

	<p>Clarity of expression, I mean, I can try to say something, but the other person is not necessarily going to understand what I am trying to say. It's as if the message gets lost along the way or becomes distorted.</p>
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Table 25. What does “Transparency and accountability” mean in this context?

<b>Emergent themes</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
<p><b>Participation, contribution &amp; recognition</b></p>	<p>A transparent process, I mean if I invite everyone to participate, I am not going to only invite those who are always there. I am going to be very open and assure that everyone participates.</p> <p>Transparency is the most important. That all of the actors have the possibility to contribute to the final decision. That all of the sectors are involved. That everyone is given the opportunity to contribute.</p> <p>That everything is done by consensus, it is summarized in two words- principles and values.</p> <p>Acknowledge them for their participation, for their involvement.</p> <p>The greatest problem is that many people who are not the right people are in these positions. There are a lot of people that do their job because that is the job that they ended up with. It is not a job that they identify with, that they like, that makes them feel proud. With these people there is no transparency, information is hidden. They have their interests and they do not care about others' interests...Because of this there is no trust. The people who are working on this issue do not focused on this sensitivity.</p>
<p><b>Collaboration &amp; resolution of turf issues</b></p>	<p>This is what we are fighting for now, transparency, accountability. Those who are involved in this have to really be transparent, not only with the management of financial resources, but in all aspects so that thing really can improve in this country. We are aware that in this country there are many weaknesses, many deficiencies. We all have to collaborate and we have to be proactive, and transparency is something that we have been working on a lot.</p> <p>Here an important point is that each sector has its own mechanisms, even though at the government level there are a series of aspects to fulfill. But sometimes each sector has its own mechanisms. And to try to put everything together so that everything is achieved, is very complicated. Each sector has its own processes, norms and requirements. And this makes the process slow and bureaucratic...It is complicated because there are so many interests there that could be affected...it is more complicated that what one imagines...it is difficult because there is going to be friction.</p>

Table 25 (Continued)

	<p>Also transparency would be something transversal...the other issue is transparency and accountability maybe as an important part of a good process...The fact that there are processes and objectives further out than short- and medium-term is important. There always has to be a critical route defined and construct it little by little in stages. Because sometimes people act day by day and not with the long-term in mind, it is more strategic...We always lose the strategic part, and this is what brings us back to the ideas of a common agenda and more strategy. But first I would put this as part of a good process. Transparency, accountability, shared agenda, a progressive critical route defined, because even these processes a lot of times are constructed along the way while generating group identity, institutional identity and alliances. It is constructed like this, together with the process. One can provide guidelines, basic elements, but the construction is done through the process itself, and these are ingredients for the construction.</p>
<p><b>Limit corruption</b></p>	<p>It means do everything well, without any corruption.</p> <p>We can't deny that there has been a lot of corruption in the country and this has hindered actions to find solutions to these problems of chronic malnutrition and food insecurity.</p>
<p><b>Sustained, long-term decision making processes that achieve their proposed goals</b></p>	<p>That the processes are sustainable. When this transparency and accountability are achieved, it really makes things long-term.</p> <p>Also here we start with one point and we end up with another completely different from what had been proposed. With this proposal for feedback and adjustments I think that we could become more flexible, but also not get lost along the way. Because this is what happens with decisions, they start talking about one thing and then end up talking about another, so this could help make thing more concrete.</p>
<p><b>Sharing of results</b></p>	<p>For me it means subject the minutes to the consideration of all the participants. I hate it when someone sends me minutes that for me don't have anything to do with what happened. So I like it when we circulate the minutes and each one has the opportunity to say yes I agree with this end product or no I don't agree. So then you have a record, because then any decision made can be justified with what happened, but if not you don't have any backing...to look up. There shouldn't be doubt that the decisions are from the group...transparency in decision making.</p> <p>It seems like an important aspect because given our background we tend to be a bit...it's as if we are not all convinced about what happens behind the decisions that are made...If I don't know a process and it is not explained well to me, then I am not going to look at it positively, I am going to be suspicious.</p>

Table 25 (Continued)

<p><b>Follow-up decision making process by acting on decisions, designating financial resources and maintaining monitoring &amp; evaluation systems</b></p>	<p>Accountability is not necessarily in terms of money. I am going to be accountable for the process in which I am responsible. I got involved in this process and achieved these results, so I have to be held accountable to all of those who supported it.</p> <p>Also this relationship with the third principle about the procedures. If there everything is clear and all of the steps and requirements are fulfilled, I think there would be transparency. And it would just be about following up and making sure that everything is going as planned...There should be a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation in order to see that everything is turning out as planned, and that the resources are being allocated to do it. That the things that should be done are being done well and that the expected results are being achieved. Because if double or triple the destined finds are spent and no results are seen, it will not work.</p> <p>I think that transparency is the same everywhere, that everything that is done is really providing the maximum benefit at the lowest cost, and that all the actions carried out benefit the majority, not only one group...actions should be measured with achievements. There should be a clear definition of how things are going to be measured so that there are no surprises.</p> <p>We can't get lost thinking that transparency is only seen in financial situations. There must be monitoring and evaluation processes with indicators of coverage, and more importantly the indicators of effects and impact have to be part of this transparency and accountability. But the problem is that if these impact indicators are not mentioned we re going to think that transparency and accountability are only seen from a financial point of view and possibly only in terms of coverage, nothing else.</p> <p>That there is accountability, but in the social sense. That accountability is not only financial.</p> <p>This means that the projects that are carried out are responses to public policy and that they are subject to evaluation...this has a lot to do with a culture of evaluation. There must be monitoring and evaluation systems. It is costly, but evaluation of the process is the way to achieve accountability and be able to follow-up or reorient the intervention.</p> <p>Transparency is conditional on the use of resources. If I am going to change the destination of the resources, there should be information provided, whether from the donor or the owner of the resources, so that they know that I am not going to do this, but I am going to do this, this and this.</p>
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Table 26. Would you be willing to participate in a process like this?

<b>Response &amp; reason why</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
<p><b>Yes (18 participants)</b></p> <p><b>Of course</b></p> <p><b>We've tried and are trying</b></p> <p><b>We have the capacity and need a good process</b></p> <p><b>It's necessary</b></p>	<p>Yes, I am very interested.</p> <p>Definitely, of course.</p> <p>Definitely.</p> <p>Yes, I am interested...I would be very happy to participate.</p> <p>Of course I would....</p> <p>Yes, of course. It is necessary.</p> <p>Yes, if you frame it as a willingness to participate, yes.</p> <p>I think so. I would be willing to participate in a process like this. In fact I think that these five principles, some more developed than others, are already in practice in health and nutrition in Guatemala.</p> <p>I would have no objection to participating because we have attempted, from the beginning, to include these five principles...All of this we have tried to do in every project.</p> <p>Absolutely. I think there we have the necessary capacity in order to do it. I think that the FNS law has to be improved, but I think that adjustments can be made to the Regulations regarding the suggestions that you have made in this report, and I think these are quite accepted. So we would be happy to be involved in whatever it takes to resolve these problems in this country because they are serious and we have the knowledge to be able to do it.</p> <p>Yes, because our forms of working have not been effective. I am referring to our forms in general, through the years that we have been working on these issues of malnutrition.</p> <p>If you propose to me an integrated and complete process, you are going to give me the assurance that my participation is going to have an impact. That's why I was telling you that the legal framework in Guatemala has a really good structure, but the weak part is this [the process/the principles] and this is like the tool to be able to achieve this. Because you are considering who are the right people who should be involved, and how to involve them the right way, but you have to think about how it is applied...with monitoring and feedback processes, that someone is keeping watch over.</p>

Table 26 (Continued)

<p><b>Organized</b></p> <p><b>Clear, organized and achieves results</b></p> <p><b>To collaborate and share</b></p> <p><b>To participate with shared principles</b></p> <p><b>Complex, but worth it</b></p> <p><b>Transparency and common agenda</b></p>	<p>Yes, yes, of course. If it were organized like this, of course I would.</p> <p>Of course I would.... If it is a clear, organized, transparent, inclusive process and on the medium-term we can see real results I think I would be willing to participate.</p> <p>I would love to. I would love to be able to collaborate and contribute. And at least be able to share the little experience that I do have. Yes, I would like to.</p> <p>Yes, yes. Of course. Because I think that at least there are principles that are shared by everyone and by participating like this we make the process ours. The interesting and striking thing is that we would have someone at our side, who is next to you and next to me to participate.</p> <p>Yes, of course. Yes, I would like to participate. Although it would be complex, I think that if it is more strategic, it can be framed in terms of short-term goals. If the achievements each year are defined it is easier to see how we are advancing. Because problems are often created when we have only a long-term vision of everything. If we define our achievements along the way it is easier to see that we are advancing and then they combine with the long-term goals. Clearly it is complicated, but I think that it is worth it.</p> <p>I think so, if the process is for this subject [FNS], and this has to do with having a shared agenda and that it is going to be transparent. I think so, I would participate.</p>
<p><b>No, I'm already involved in this process</b></p> <p><b>(1 participant)</b></p>	<p>I am already in this process, we continue in this process. The truth is that I am in this process. It's not about whether I want to, it's that I am already in it. Because I am convinced that the problem of food and nutrition security can not be resolved with the participation of one sector alone, whether it is civil society or the government or the private sector. This experience has been fruitful to show us that this is a very big and complex problem that requires a lot of financial and human resources. So we either all accept it or we are barely going to make any mark at all on the stone that we want to carve. I continue in this process, we are in this process.</p>
<p><b>Depends. I would like to, but I do not have time.</b></p> <p><b>(1 participant)</b></p>	<p>No. Because I don't have time. Well, I would like to, but I don't want to get involved in anything else, because I don't fulfill my duty. The truth is that I can't participate...Yes, I would like to participate. Yes, that fact that it is a good process gets my attention. It's not that I would be sitting there and nobody knows what we are going to talk about. Another thing is that sometimes there are too many people. Sometimes it is too many because there hasn't been a good selection. It is necessary to exactly what it is about and why I am going to be there.</p>

Table 27. Do you think that the other actors would be willing to participate in a process like this?

<b>Response &amp; reason why</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
<p><b>Yes (15 participants)</b></p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p><b>It is a priority for our country</b></p>	<p>I think so. At least the people that I know and that have been involved in this, yes, they are willing. It is a priority for our country. We can't expect that everything comes from the government, we have to be proactive and very positive in these processes. I think so, they would agree. I speak for them based on the comments that I have heard.</p>
<p><b>Difficult, but lot of interest</b></p>	<p>I think so. It has been difficult, but there is a lot of interest.</p>
<p><b>They have been involved</b></p>	<p>Of course, I think so. I think that they would...those who have been involved...and I have the understanding that they are going to revisit the issue.</p>
<p><b>This will have a future</b></p>	<p>I think so...I think that there are a lot of people interested in working in this. And it is hard to support a lot in the process. I think that maybe what we would have to see is the leadership, who would coordinate this process. But I think that there are a lot of people interested and this is good because this way we know that this is going to have a future.</p>
<p><b>Viable process to achieve results</b></p>	<p>Yes, I think so. People are avid...often times we don't find the way to do things and if someone presents a proposal that they see as viable and that could really lead to the changes we want, then I think that people would be willing to join in.</p>
<p><b>Convincing to work to see results</b></p>	<p>I would say yes. In general this gets peoples' attention, it is convincing that I am going to work in something that is really going to lead to results. Many people, especially those with the most experience, say, no, I am not going because I don't want to waste my time, I am busy and I already know that nothing is going to come of this.</p>
<p><b>We are willing to give our time to resolve the problem</b></p>	<p>I think so. I think that everyone is willing to give their time to resolve the problem...if it is not all voluntary work then I think it can be done. I think this is very possible and we are going to find people willing to do it.</p>
<p><b>Some more focused on some principles</b></p>	<p>I think so. It has been attempted to carry out processes like this in some form or another. Some actors are going to be more focused in one part and some on other parts.</p>
<p><b>To understand issues</b></p>	<p>I think so. First, I think that we have not finished understanding the issues...this has to be established. We know how, but it is often not politically the best option.</p>

Table 27 (Continued)

<p><b>If it will improve our processes</b></p>	<p>I think so. Right now I can't see that there are hidden interests that would not allow for participation. It would really be inappropriate that, to benefit everyone, one did not want to participate...if we frame it as it is going to help improve things, then I think that everyone would participate.</p>
<p><b>Organized, clear roles and responsibilities</b></p>	<p>Yes. Because if they tell you that your participation is going to be organized like this, you are going to be involved in the structure like this, that the process will be carried out in this form, then you are aware of your participation, what your role is, the importance of your participation and your role. And another thing is that you take the responsibility. If you are aware of your role then you are more responsible in fulfilling your role. Without a good process, people talk, talk, and talk, but don't do anything. Because we all know a lot, but we don't do. Because at some point someone says do it because this is what has to be done, and you do it.</p>
<p><b>Guatemala is collaborative</b></p>	<p>I would say that some would, but I don't dare say that everyone will. There are people who along the way say no. But I think yes. Guatemalans are very collaborative. I would say yes.</p>
<p><b>Surely those in health sector &amp; SESAN, not sure who else</b></p>	<p>I think so, but I cannot be sure who would and who wouldn't. But I think that within the health sector people are going to agree with these principles. Also in SESAN, I would also expect the same response.</p>
<p><b>Only if the 'right' people are there</b></p>	<p>Yes, as long as the right people are involved. This is the point of departure.</p>
<p><b>Depends/not sure (4 participants)</b></p>	
<p><b>If the process is convened by a certain institution, such as SESAN</b></p>	<p>It depends how you frame it, you should propose it at the institutional level. For example, FNS issues should be within CONASAN, articulated by SESAN. If it is proposed there, I don't think there are any barriers with these principles. Institutionally we would have to evaluate the possibility.</p>
<p><b>Good will is not enough, we lack transparency</b></p>	<p>I think that people are willing. The problem is that along the way it can't be done with will alone. It's not only about will, but also about having a guide to face the process that will be developed with these principles. And the people who are not willing to share, they shouldn't participate. The problem is that many of us are not transparent, this is one of our main problems. To think that everything is done with good will is difficult. Transparency and finding common objectives is also important. I think that this deserves greater effort.</p>
<p><b>Shouldn't have a partisan agenda</b></p>	<p>I don't know...I don't know what the other actors think. I think so though. I think that it would be hard for them to value a good process if it is based on partisan views.</p>

Table 27 (Continued)

	I imagine that they would have to be motivated. But there are some who have the same intentions, like FAO, who are always willing to work together with others...there has been a lot of talk about purely democratic rights and I think the intention is to help start solving the problem, we would have to accept the technical and operational capacity and the knowledge of the people and on the other hand the political and partisan interests.
<b>Question was not asked to 1 participant</b>	

Table 28. (Extended Table 8) Would a process like this be possible in this context in Guatemala? What would need to change in order to achieve this?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Emergent themes indicating existing barriers/necessary changes</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
<b>Yes</b>	Time	<p>Yes, This is what happens. But, it takes time to achieve this, but we do achieve it.</p> <p>Yes, but it shouldn't take too much time. Because the need are there and we are in a situation where the global conditions are costing lives. If it has to be done, we are going to do it, we just have to make the process more efficient. This doesn't mean that it should be done too fast, but it has to be, as you say "a good process." But short, short. We can't spends months in this. It wouldn't be worth it.</p> <p>I think so, even though it will be difficult. But it could be done. I think that it is very complicated, but it is necessary. Complicated because of the diversity of actors that are involved, for the attitudes that people have. Also because the results are not seen in the short-term. Sometimes there are groups who want immediate results, but to start now and hope that in one month we will see a nutritional impact is impossible. So many people lose patience and stop participating. This makes it more complicated, but I think [this process] would be worth it.</p>
	Clear objectives	<p>I think so. The ideas have to be clear. Very, very clear concepts that are understood in order to address the problem with one language.</p> <p>Yes, as long as whoever is leading it is clear about what we are doing, how it is going to be done, and has the authority or power to carry it out.</p>
	Leadership	Yes, it can be done, but we need leadership...this is the missing principle.

Table 28 (Continued)

	Political will	Of course, I'd say so. Especially now that it is open, I mean, now that we know more about the issues. Before one talked about FNS and few people understood. I don't want to say that now everyone knows the subject well, but there are people who know the subject well and others who don't. The political will exists. There have good intentions, but the best decisions aren't taken. What is really involved in a process is not known...I don't think it would take much time. If there is political will, it can be done in a short time.
	Increase awareness	Yes, I think so...I think that these processes have to be made well-knowns, because they are unknown. There are few sectors that know these and they are not going to know...I think that these reports could be shared among those involved in order to raise awareness among those involved in order to take the right steps, the appropriate steps to improve these processes.
	Just yes	Yes.  Yes. Complicated, but possible.
<b>No</b>	Inequalities	I don't think so. Because this is a country with a lot of inequality, with a lot of privileges. It is a country traditionally based on the fact that decisions are made by the strongest...it is a matter of putting into the real context. It seems very difficult due to the inequality among the privileges.
	Time	It is a long process. In Guatemala I don't think it is possible.
<b>Depends</b>	Clear purpose	It depends on the purpose of the process. For example, everyone places importance on the moral part. How the issue is framed is the basis of how we are going to begin to talk about it.
	Time	Maybe...but it would take time...I think that we can't yet expect that it will be like this...I don't know. Now also with the problem of the crisis...and one very, very big issue is the money that is spent in these meetings and maybe they don't result in much.
	Already in process, but interrupted or only in part	In fact this has already been started. It has just been interrupted.  Part of this is already being done, so this is a way of organizing it. You have to keep emphasizing what all these parts of the process are...Maybe we are prepared for some parts, but not for all.

Table 29. What is the importance that the participants agree on the process and agree that certain elements make a good process?

<b>Emergent themes</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
Interest, motivation & ownership of process	Maybe the most important is this last part [transparency and accountability]. I think these would be motivating. It is something that we are not usually accustomed to.

Table 29 (Continued)

	<p>Well, if people believe in the process I think something can be done. But if they participate by obligation they are simply not going to fulfill some responsibilities. It could be by obligation, by mandate, and this way things will get done, but only if there is true interest. This way things could change a lot faster. It would facilitate the process, the results. But as long as the importance is not seen, the group's interest would fail. It would be a lot slower, or even stop. There has to be interest.</p> <p>Because first if they are not in agreement, eventually the group is going to be a lot smaller than at first...I think that if in the end everyone does not agree, you are not going finish the process, or along the way it is going to be a lot more difficult or a lot longer than it should be.</p>
Inclusion	To avoid someone feeling that they weren't taken into account.
Clear rules	The rules themselves. I think it is important to make the principles of a good process clear, the rules of the process. To discuss what type of process is wanted.
Conflict resolution, consensus & collective decision-making	<p>The importance that they agree would be for clarity and in order to be able to resolve conflicts that arise. And to be able to use the decision as a decision that was made by everyone...Maybe they don't want to understand the different interests, or maybe they have other interests or goals that don't coincide. So I would like if we had this flexibility. So we can satisfy what we want to do as a group...for it to be a good process it is important that it is a collective decision, that it is a process.</p> <p>If not, the conflicts are going to be many more than we would like.</p> <p>In this case the majority doesn't count. It's about everyone being engaged in the issues. It's not about the majority.</p>
Trust	<p>It builds trust. We believe in this, but usually we don't have it.</p> <p>With these principles you have the trust that you need to get involved.</p> <p>I think it builds trust and when the methodology is known I think that the possibility that the participants agree is greater because they have clarity.</p>
Achievement of results	<p>The importance that all of the actors agree on the process is so the process is appropriate and the interventions will really be those needed.</p> <p>So the solution is easier and more viable. Because actions taken will be agreed and won't be individualistic.</p> <p>I think that it is to find common points from the beginning in order to build on them, because without this, it is much more difficult to follow the steps.</p>
Acceptance of results	<p>The importance is that you will see that they agree on the results.</p> <p>There are people who make a decision, but later they say no. To me you have to understand they are now against the decision...[the fact that it was a good process helps] them accept the decisions.</p> <p>Because in the end people won't necessarily be satisfied with the results.</p>

Table 30. (Extended Table 10) Would you be willing to accept the resulting decisions?

Response & reason why	Quotes from interviews
<p><b>Yes (20 participants)</b></p>	
<p><b>Satisfaction and ownership of process</b></p>	<p>Of course I would, of course. The way it is organized and that I will feel that I am involved in this, I think that we would feel satisfied and united to the decision process. And obviously accept the decisions that were made democratically with the participants...First it is the way that is it carried out...When people understand all of these kinds of situations as those who are involved I think it makes it easier to agree and to reach consensus.</p>
<p><b>I participate and am involved</b></p>	<p>Yes, if I am participating, of course I am going to defend this. Not if it has been manipulated or if everyone was coerced. But if the group agreed and liked it this way and it is what the people want and they see it this way, then of course I am going to be in favor of changing my position. But not if they have manipulated the process.</p>
<p><b>Decisions made with participation and in the common interest</b></p>	<p>Definitely. If there has been participation. I don't have nay doubt that I, or others, would accept the decisions. Even though sometimes I don't agree, but if the majority sees that this is the common good, then I would be willing. If the majority see this as beneficial, I don't doubt that it is going to be beneficial.</p>
<p><b>If decision is technical and made collectively</b></p>	<p>Definitely. Because I would know the effort and I think a government institution would have to carry it out. If they commit to carrying out an agreed upon, transparent, democratic process, of course I am going to participate. This is why I am working here...to support the government. And if the government says, ok, how are we going to do this, of course I am going to be there, this is what we all want...if they do it in this way, for me it would be insolent, amoral not to respect what results. But of course this would imply respecting these principles...If I am not convinced that it was a technical decision, made by everyone involved and affected, I am not going to respect it.</p>
<p><b>If aligned with community needs</b></p>	<p>I think so, because we would try to use the decisions that result from these principles to prioritize projects. Yes, support all that results, yes...In this case we have to see what is the best route. But, yes, we would be willing to accept any decision that is aligned with the needs of the community.</p>
<p><b>If it is a focused, logical and in line with the law</b></p>	<p>Personal is different from institutional...the institution should be willing to follow decisions that come from this process...personally, yes, of course...if we achieve it with the proposed focus. These principles make sense in the process that we have in Guatemala and it responds to the goals of SINASAN.</p>

Table 30 (Continued)

<p><b>We have to start somewhere</b></p>	<p>Yes, yes. Because we have to start somewhere...I think that we have to try to accept the decisions.</p>
<p><b>If participatory, democratic and consensus-based</b></p>	<p>Yes, yes. Because it would be a democratic, participatory process. At some point, with participation, one shares their opinions and suggestions. And in the end, because of the diversity, it is not going to turn out exactly how you proposed, but it will be something based on consensus. It would result from consensus, so it can't be how one thinks because there are a lot of actors with many different trainings and from different disciplines. So, yes, I would accept the decisions.</p>
<p><b>Part of the good process is that participants agree to accept final decisions</b></p>	<p>I think that one would have to start from the principle that the ideal agreement would be to accept the general agreements from the beginning. Based on this argument we would definitely have to consider what is done even if we don't agree. But this would be part of the agreement upon getting involved. So the answer is yes, of course we would be working with the decisions even if we don't actually agree...According to your initial agreement, which is to accept these agreements as part of a good process...this agreement has to exist...you have my word and I am going to do it...it is about values...this is what we are talking about...If the points of view or arguments...were weak or not strong enough, ok, I am going to have to accept it. I have no other option than to accept it and work toward achieving the agreement.</p>
<p><b>Yes, but difficult</b></p>	<p>Yes, of course. But I know it is going to be difficult. Because in every case there are many interests.</p>
<p><b>Achieved objectives with shared vision</b></p>	<p>I think that every individual or institution should view the results as achievement of the objectives. I think that more than accepting it or not, it's about creating a shared vision. This is the point where one can make a group or country decision. So, as people feel identified with processes that are carried out well, I think that it is more harmonic. Because I think that we are in this because we believe in this. And because it gives us personal and institutional growth.</p>
<p><b>Process guarantees that all was done by consensus and with dialogue and discussion</b></p>	<p>Yes. Because what I think the process does is exhaust consensus and I think that when you participate in a good group it is clear that it is not your decision that is going to be the final one. But the process is guaranteeing that we go through steps of consensus, discussion and dialogue to make a good decision. It is clear to me that there is going to a decision, although it won't be my proposal. But it was discussed, made known...But if I go through a good decision making process and these principles are seen, yes, I would be willing to accept it. It guarantees a process of analysis, of proposals and participation from everyone. But if they are unilateral decisions...that are going to help certain people, I don't think so. If it is a good process, I am going to participate in implementing the action even though I don't agree...If there had been a good process for the implementation of the PRDC, I think that people would be more participatory, more convinced, because they were taken into account in the decision making.</p>

Table 30 (Continued)

<b>Consensus and common agenda</b>	Yes because it was done by consensus and yes we had a common agenda and we are discussing common criteria within the process, I would say yes. There would be no problem.
<b>If the other side's point is valid</b>	Yes. But if there are other mechanisms to fulfill dietary requirements, we would be willing to accept this. There are many ways to reduce malnutrition, with or without food distribution. If we see how it can be done without, we have no problem.
<b>With these elements, yes</b>	Of course, if it is an organized, clear, transparent process that confirms that we are going to achieve the objectives, that at the table everyone has reached consensus, of course.
<b>Objectives achieved</b>	Yes, I think so. As long as it is what is intended, that the objectives are achieved. I think so, we would agree.
<b>I agreed on the process</b>	Yes, It seems to me that when we talk about consensus we have to get to a point where we have to ease off, and not expect that it will be how we would like it to be...and if one participates in this process and says yes in the end, there is no room to complain about the results. There was time to present your arguments, your pros and cons and even then if in the end it wasn't possible, at least you provided the information in the moment and did what you could. And not in the say that you didn't like it, but you didn't say it in time...it is likely that one enters the process with a certain idea or position and throughout the discussion you realize that in reality you are wrong, that maybe yours is not the best option. But in the end, if I am convinced of my position, as long as the majority agree I think that at least I could accept it.
<b>Win-win</b>	This is why I was telling you that a good process has to give the sense of win-win, because, for example, with chronic malnutrition, if nothing that we proposed is accepted, institutionally and personally, I am not going to be able to continue in this. However, if I am addressing important issues for the country and I am trying to achieve my goals, both institutional and personal, I am going to stay here. And I can form Complementary alliances.

Table 31. (Extended Table 11) Would others be willing to accept the resulting decisions?

<b>Response &amp; reason why</b>	<b>Quotes from interviews</b>
<b>Yes (13 participants)</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	Yes, I think so.
	Yes, I think so.

Table 31 (Continued)

<p><b>If there was a good process</b></p>	<p>Yes, I think so. If it really is a good process.</p>
	<p>I think so...personally, we have had the experience that often we meet and people want to push their position. So this is not a good process.</p>
	<p>Yes, I think so...For any decision making there has to be a process, but processes like this don't exist. They don't involve people. People say at least they could have listened to us, if they had invited us to participate, things would not be like this. The desire is for the establishment of processes, good or bad, but processes.</p>
<p><b>Support consensus, fact that there was a good process</b></p>	<p>Yes. Yes, but I am very naive. But if I believe that they would support the decision of the distribution of Vita Cereal if it had been a group decision. This is a super controversial case in the country. Because it has many connotations, and people presume that there are many elements that are not technical, not transparent, without accountability in the decision making process...the question is, what was the criteria that was used to make this decision? What was the process to make the decisions to arrive at this conclusion? It wasn't this [point to the tool], because the right people were not there. And if they were there, they were not listened to, they could not influence the decision. And there was no transparency or accountability.</p>
<p><b>Must respect the consensus</b></p>	<p>If this is a good process, and is based on consensus, if everyone agrees, it has to be respected. It would be bad if someone did not respect I, unless it is totally against their principles.</p>
<p><b>Common interest and achieve an impact</b></p>	<p>I think so. People see that in reality the decisions were made thinking of the common good, and thinking that this is going to be what really leads to an impact, people will accept it. I don't think that they are going to oppose.</p>
<p><b>If done in common interest, what the country needs</b></p>	<p>Yes, it is influential, but I don't know if they would accept it because I don't know if it has to do with the interests of the actors. But what would always prevail is that we have this in common and this is what we as a country need. I think yes...Without this we can't build something in common and each person is going to stick to their own interests, they think 'it's better I don't go' and they leave the process. Dialogue is broken. Often sectoral interests prevail over the interests of the country.</p>
<p><b>If it is done based on the law</b></p>	<p>Definitely, if it is based on the structure of the law, if it comes from the law. It wouldn't be questioned because it is institutional.</p>

Table 31 (Continued)

<p><b>Participatory, democratic process is convincing</b></p>	<p>Of course, of course. I can give you a practical example with the FNS policy...There was a negotiation with the embassy of the U.S. The government of Guatemala defended the U.S. more than its own country. All of the representatives of Central America were furious with the Government of Guatemala....but then there were people dying in the streets. All of this happened when we were negotiating the policy and the law. And all of the manifestations were broken with the government except for that of FNS. I managed to convince them that we could not take the liberty of breaking off this negotiation because there were children dying of hunger. I am convinced that I convinced them not because my arguments were eloquent, but because the process had been participatory and democratic...I am convinced that there were two reasons, the subject is very sensitive, but also that the process had been carried out well.</p>
<p><b>Maybe (4 participants)</b></p> <p><b>I hope so; this has been proposed, but not applied</b></p> <p><b>Depends on conflict management; transparency will help</b></p> <p><b>Guatemalans are opinionated</b></p> <p><b>People change; I can't speak for them</b></p>	<p>I hope so. These solutions have been proposed, these solutions are there. What needs to be done is apply them.</p> <p>This is going to depend on how the conflicts that arise are managed. As long as it is discussed well and the reason for the conflict is well understood, greater consensus will be achieved, and in the end the people are going to say that they are content with the results. But, of course, not everyone is going to agree. As long as this is transparent it seems that people will not complain much. I mean, someone cannot come and say 'I do not agree with this' and start to attack the process because they aren't content with what resulted because they were there from the beginning. But if it is transparent it is going to be very hard to block or discredit the process itself. It is was seen as having organized stages and that the person who is complaining was there in the process, this would take away from the validation of their argument.</p> <p>In general it is likely that consensus will be reached...three Guatemalans have four opinions.</p> <p>I can't speak for them. Because faces change, people change. For example, as far as I know people were willing to work. And the reception and what was achieved was achieved due to the support of the different entities.</p>
<p><b>Some will, but others won't (3 participants)</b></p> <p><b>Easier to accept decisions in some cases</b></p>	<p>I think that all of the actors would be in our same situation. The decisions can sometimes be favorable and in some cases unfavorable. There are cases in which it would be easier to accept some decisions more than others.</p>

Table 31 (Continued)

<p><b>There are disagreements and confrontations</b></p> <p><b>Depends on the values of each participant and leadership</b></p>	<p>I think that there might be acceptance, but there are also going to be actors who are not going to accept. And this is typical here, that we start with confrontations...definitely there are going to be groups that do not agree. And this is what makes the situation take so long. Because there are radical groups, so of course there is going to be a little of everything. And this makes the process more difficult.</p> <p>If I am honest I don't know, because it is going to depend on every participant. The problem is that participants are selected not only for values but rather for capacities and who are the most adequate. These are not necessarily those who have an open mind to listen and think about new ideas. We hope that people have good values, but it is definitely not always going to be like this. I don't know, we have to find ways out, to resolve these problems or generate alternatives that are not necessarily about a yes or a no, but rather about having intermediate options. This is going to depend a lot on leadership.</p>
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Table 32. References to technical, knowledge-based and evidence-based decision-making

Emergent themes	Quotes from interviews
<p><b>Institutional roles: technical versus political</b></p>	<p>Now SESAN exists, there are meetings...and things are going well...There can be good intention, but they aren't carried out because they have to present their purposes to levels that are more political than technical. So we arrive at an option that is not necessarily the best technically but makes for better visibility.</p> <p>The role of SESAN is more of technical coordination, not political coordination...INCOPAS makes decisions at a different level...about technical opinions about situations...So INCOPAS has to say something about the fortified food, they have a technical opinion and they share it. So CONASAN comes and says that they can't have opinions about this because this is a very technical matter and does not fit within their role, that INCOPAS should be a consultation to civil society, but not for technical issues. But, yes, this is within the role of INCOPAS.</p> <p>There has to always be a technical secretariat, with representatives from both parts. Because generally government is more political than technical. But I am talking about helping people express their ideas, transform their ideas into institutional documents. The people from rural areas have excellent ideas and we have to help them transform them into an institutional language. There always has to be someone with technical training to help, if not, this will not happen.</p>

Table 32 (Continued)

	<p>I would say that there should be a technical group. There was one, GISAN, but it disappeared, it is not in the law. It is an inter institutional group, a technical group that should sit with INCOPAS, to talk with them, GISAN with the technical role and CONASAN with the political role. But what happens is that in the political part they discuss technical things that are nothing within their role.</p> <p>And what happened with INCOPAS, is that it was technical people. Technical, and not very political, and with an interest in finding common interests.</p>
<p><b>How decision making is or should be</b></p>	<p>The politicians are the ones who make the decisions for the implementation of actions. But the technical people are the ones who design the interventions and civil society are the ones who live the situations. These would be the right people. Currently there is more participation in the technical aspect. And what is lacking is the participation of the politicians and civil society.</p> <p>[Decision making should be] technical, knowledge-based and inclusive.</p> <p>It is impossible to reduce malnutrition without financial support and technical assistance.</p> <p>[The decision to distribute Vita Cereal] is a super controversial case in the country. Because it has many connotations, and people presume that there are many elements that are not technical, not transparent, without accountability in the decision making process</p>
<p><b>The 'right' people that should be involved in decision making processes: political versus technical</b></p>	<p>That they have absolute knowledge of the problem in Guatemala.</p> <p>It means involving the key actors, the ones with knowledge.</p> <p>It has to be somebody who is working in these issues, with prior knowledge in order to know who are the actors that should be involved.</p> <p>Sometimes they are not technical people, but they are the right people. So 'right' depends on the situation.</p> <p>I read the word 'right' and I think it is who has knowledge, that knows the issues...it could also be that they come politically, but also that they have the right knowledge.</p> <p>The technical level because they know the problem and the political level because that is where the final decisions are made, those that lead to actions. It can't be only technical, or only political, or even only those who know the issues. Everyone has to be involved.</p> <p>I think that the technical and political levels should participate, in the sense that they make decisions and assure that they resources are there so it is done.</p>

Table 32 (Continued)

	<p>For the same reason that there are levels, not to try to make the technical people tell the political people what to say, or vice versa because sometimes that is where there are conflicts. So at the political level we should try to be highly aware, understand the issues at hand and this could help the technical level. So they can say that yes we support you and then find resources. But the technical level would have to be in the middle, trying to influence the political level in decision making, but also understanding the part from the affected group so that they are well-represented or someone can speak for the people affected by the problems.</p>
<p><b>Accepting resulting decisions</b></p>	<p>If I am not convinced that [the final decision] was a technical decision, made by everyone involved and affected, I am not going to respect it.</p>
<p><b>Results of a 'good' process</b></p>	<p>With social participation, that generates social accountability.</p>
<p><b>Experts</b></p>	<p>There are many people who are experts or who could contribute a lot, but are not necessarily inside the institutions. This is my point. I think that upon convening the people those who are interested should be invited...by looking for and asking for those who consider or believe that they could contribute information and that are not directly associated with or working in the institutions.</p>

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