









### The Rutgers University Policy Research Consortium

## Impacts of Policy Change: Infant Cereals in Malawi

Target Countries: Malawi

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Contract: Rutgers University Subaward: Tufts University Dates: March 2015 – Aug 2019



#### Why focus on infant cereals?

- Infants from 6 to 24 mo. have rapid potential growth but small stomachs, so need high density semi-solid foods
- Since the 1960s, food aid programs have used ready-tocook premixes (e.g. SuperCereal Plus)
- Similar premixed cereals are routinely sold by food companies in all countries of the world, but local brands are rarely trusted unless backed by expensive advertising

# Malawi's proposed national standard could scale up private sector sales from local millers and food companies

- The Malawi Bureau of Standards drafted infant cereal standards in 2017, but not yet implemented
- Standards and certification are needed for small, local entrants to compete with established multinationals
- To measure the potential impact of these standards, we did marketplace experiments with 359 mothers at 16 locations
- We also tested actual quality for 94 samples of 8 brands, to verify nutrient contents and mycotoxin contamination

#### We found high potential demand, but low and variable quality

- Caregivers have a strong preference for premixed cereals, due to difficulty of feeding infants with family foods
- Existing products have unpredictable contents, so standards and certification are needed to build trust and expand sales

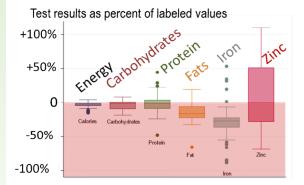


Figure 1: Nutrient test results for 94 samples from 8 brands of premixed cereals in Malawi (July 2018)



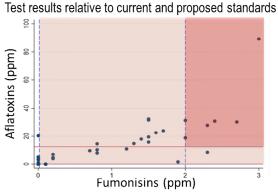


Figure 2: Mycotoxin test results for 94 samples from 8 brands of premixed cereals in Malawi (July 2018)