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# How Can Thinking and Working Politically Strengthen Your Health Commodity Supply Chain?

**Global Webinar**  
April 19, 2023

Local Health System Sustainability Project (LHSS)

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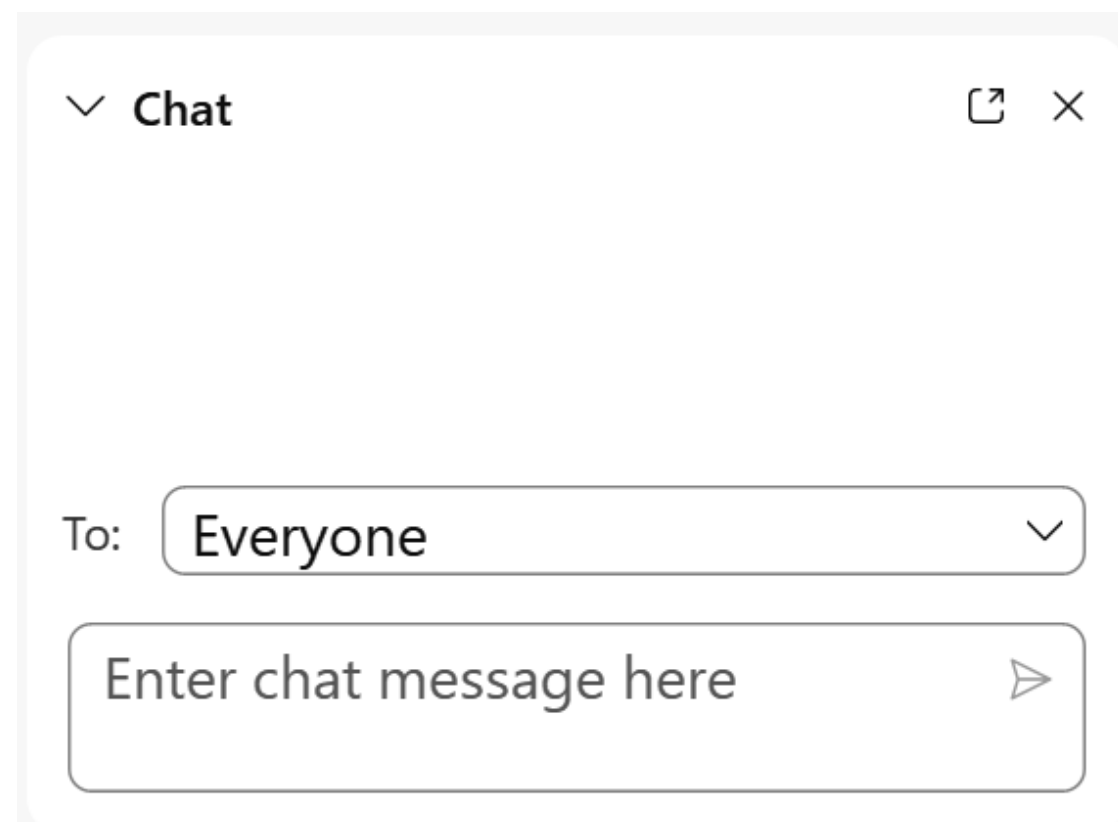
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# Today's Agenda

## Audience Poll

## Presentations

- What are TWP and PEA and why do they matter for supply chains?
- When is PEA useful for helping solve supply chain problems?

## Panel Discussion

- How do we see PEA being used for supply chain strengthening?

## Presentation

- How can the new LHSS primer for supply chain PEA help?

## Q&A Discussion

# Let's Learn about You



## **Audience Poll Question:**

When you hear the terms ‘thinking and working politically’ or ‘political economy,’ what is the first word that comes to mind?

# Presenters



**Shipra Srihari**  
Health Systems Strengthening Advisor  
Abt Associates



**Tom Brown**  
Technical Director, Global Health Supply Chain  
Abt Associates

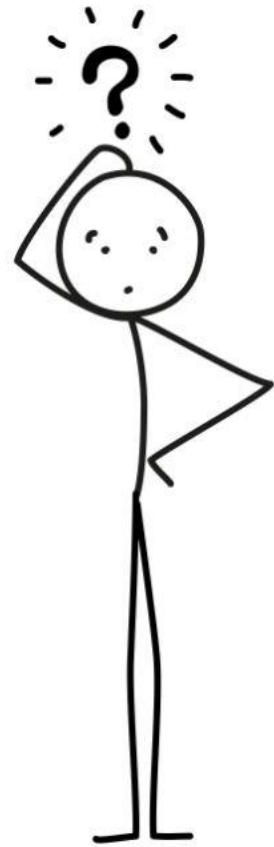


# What are TWP and PEA and why do they matter for supply chains?

Shipra Srihari



# What is thinking and working politically?



**Thinking and working politically (TWP)** means being:

- Well-informed about the political, economic, social context
- More astute in designing interventions and choosing reforms which are politically feasible
- Sufficiently flexible to change your approach:
  - As your understanding of what works and what doesn't work deepens, and/or
  - As the context changes

# Are you already thinking and working politically?

## ***Are you:***

Understanding what drives stakeholders' behavior and the power dynamics between them?

Identifying potential blockers and developing strategies to engage them?

Considering whether those holding power will realistically change the status quo?

Identifying reformers and ways to build coalitions supporting change?

***Then you're already thinking and working politically!***

## What is political economy analysis?



**Source:** The Policy Practice/Overseas Development Institute

**Political economy analysis (PEA)** is a structured approach for examining context:

‘Getting under the surface of things’ – by examining the realities of the political, economic, social, and cultural context

Uncovering non-obvious facts about how things *really* work:

- Relevant history, social and cultural norms
- The formal and informal ‘rules of the game’
- The key actors and interest groups, how power is distributed and their interests/incentives

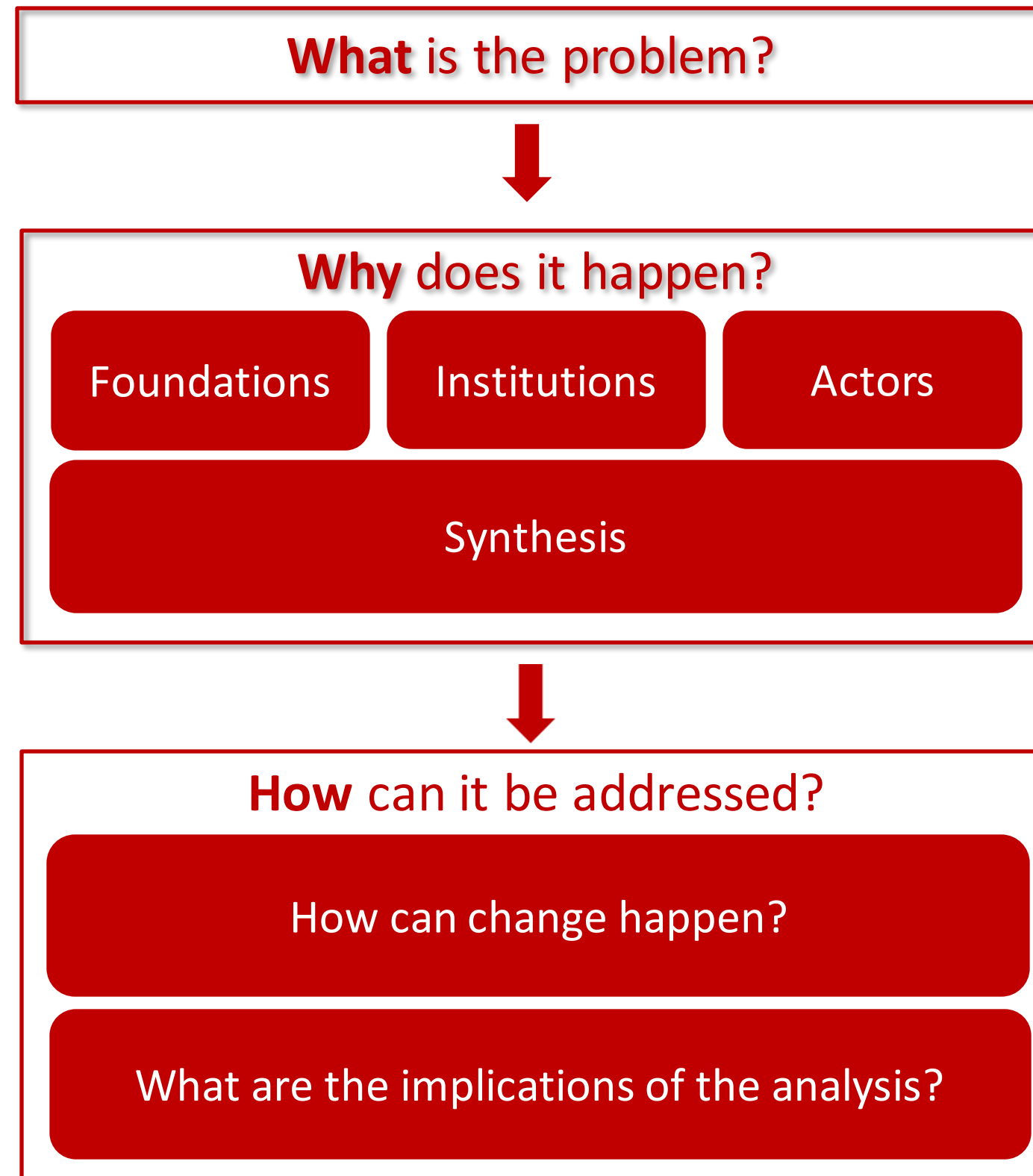
## **Why is applied PEA important for development (and supply chains)?**

Applied PEA can help you:

- Figure out what is politically feasible
- Identify realistic pathways of change for achieving goals
- Develop interventions and approaches that are localized, practical, flexible, adaptive

...and therefore increase the likelihood that you will see positive change!

# What is a good framework for applied PEA?



Keep asking the question, *“How does change happen in this system, and how can we work to achieve change?”*

Source: The Policy Practice/Overseas Development Institute



# When is PEA useful for helping solve supply chain problems?

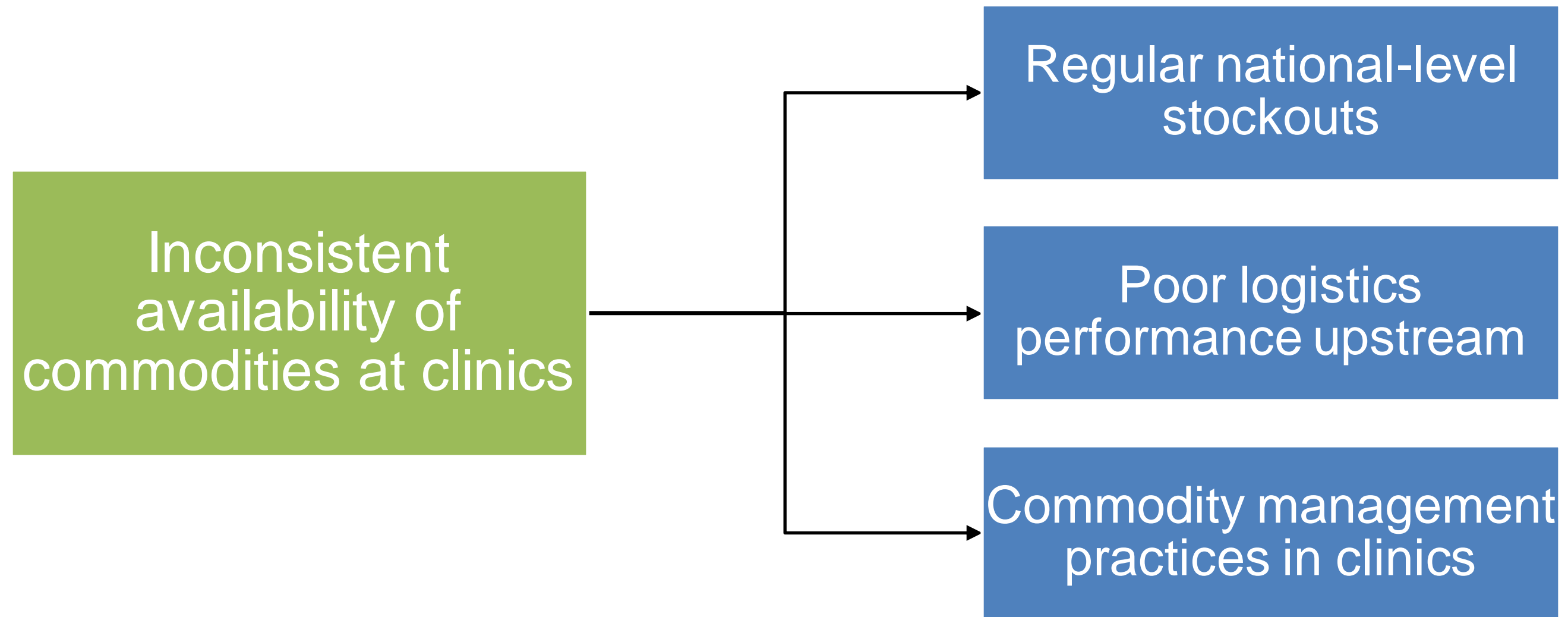
Tom Brown

Local Health System Sustainability Project (LHSS)

## Two important questions

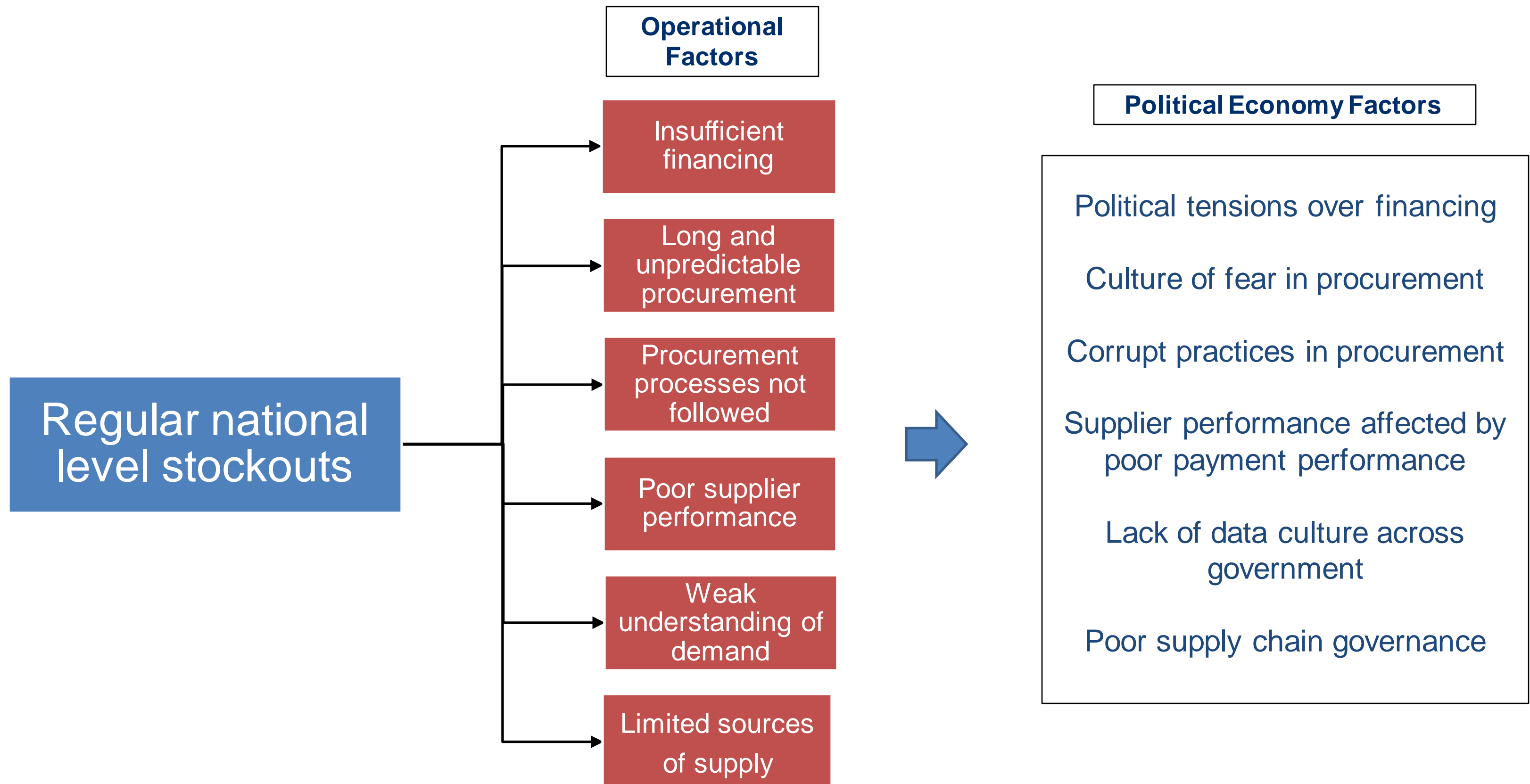
1. Can PEA be used to help examine any supply chain problem?
  - *Most supply chain problems are down to a combination of operational and PE factors*
2. Are some types of supply chain problems more prone to political economy factors than others?
  - *Problems connected to flow of money or allocation of other resources*
  - *Wicked problems that have persisted over time*
  - *Public sector supply chain problems*

# A typical supply chain problem and contributing factors





# Examining problems using PEA often reveals operational *and* PE factors



# What's a supply chain problem where PEA could help?

## **The problem:**

- An audit of public sector clinics reveals regular medicine stockouts
- Products are generally in stock at central-level distribution center

## **The diagnosis:**

- Stockouts caused by vehicle shortages in districts, poor data management, stock management and ordering practices

## **The intervention:**

- New supply chain design that tackles these problems ... but is not implemented

## **What TWP/PEA would have added an appreciation of:**

- Underlying reasons for vehicle shortages and poor stock/data management
- District directors' concern about loss of control over medicine supply
- Unfortunate timing for reforms



# How do we see PEA being used for supply chain strengthening (and what are some challenges and opportunities)?

Panel Discussion

## Moderator



**Shipra Srihari**  
Health Systems  
Strengthening Advisor,  
Abt Associates

## Panelists



**David Jacobstein**  
Democracy Specialist,  
Center for Democracy, Human  
Rights and Governance,  
USAID



**Bonface Fundafunda**  
Regional Director, East  
Africa,  
Africa Resource Center



**Tiffany Marshall  
Cummins**  
Program Analyst II  
Commodity Security &  
Logistics Division, Office of  
Population and Reproductive  
Health,  
USAID



**Obua Thomas  
Ocwa**  
AG. Registrar,  
Pharmacy Board,  
Senior Pharmacist,  
Uganda Ministry of  
Health



# How can the new primer for supply chain PEA help?

Tom Brown

Local Health System Sustainability Project (LHSS)

# The Importance of Political Economy Analysis for Strengthening Health Commodity Supply Chains: A Primer

## **1. What is the purpose of the primer and who is it for?**

Aimed at supply chain practitioners who need to understand and navigate political economy issues in their day-to-day work

## **2. What is PEA and why is it important for supply chains?**

Explains the fundamentals of PEA and relates it to supply chain problems

## **3. For what types of supply chain problem is PEA useful?**

Examines supply chain problems through a political economy lens and looks at limitations of PEA

Available online at: <https://www.lhssproject.org/resource/importance-political-economy-analysis-strengthening-health-commodity-supply-chains-primer>

# The Importance of Political Economy Analysis for Strengthening Health Commodity Supply Chains: A Primer

## **4. How and when do I apply PEA in my work?**

Describes the different levels of PEA and the applicability and resources required for each

## **5. How do I implement a PEA?**

Describes how to plan, prepare and implement a PEA

## **6. Practical considerations for doing PEA in a supply chain context**

Identifying stakeholders, having productive conversations, tips for discussing politically sensitive issues

## **7. Annex**

Sample lines of inquiry, structure of desk review, and links to supply chain PEA briefs



**USAID**

# Q&A Discussion

Please submit questions in the chat box





## Moderator



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Health Systems  
Strengthening Advisor,  
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Health

# Thank you!

Primer for supply chain PEA  
available at:

[www.lhssproject.org](http://www.lhssproject.org)

<https://www.lhssproject.org/resource/importance-political-economy-analysis-strengthening-health-commodity-supply-chains-primer>

