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# Communicating NTA results to policymakers

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**How can we best communicate  
our NTA results to policymakers?**

**What does the evidence tell us?**

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# Key components of a successful policy communication strategy

- Establish and maintain continuous dialogue between researchers and policymakers
- Provide clear, simple messages with memorable indicators (support ratio!!)
- Show the social and economic **benefits** of your findings
- Use a variety of channels and formats
- Pay attention to timing

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# Continuous dialogue between researchers and policymakers

- Policymakers pay most attention to research they commission themselves
- Alternatively, you can establish an advisory board of policymakers
  - Better, more relevant research
  - Better ownership of results
- Give policymakers an active role in meetings
  - Presenting results
  - Developing the policy response

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# Clear, simple messages, memorable indicators, sensitively framed

- Three message tests:
  - Your mother
  - Your teenage children
  - Your breakfast cereal
- Three aspects of message framing:
  - Political context
  - Institutional pressures
  - Ideological commitment

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# Clear, simple messages, memorable indicators, sensitively framed

... tests:

- Your ...
- Three aspects of ...
  - Political context
  - Institutional pressures
  - Ideological commitment

**“Mobilizing metaphors” shape the way problems are understood**

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# Show the social and economic benefits of your research

- We're tired of problems with no solutions
- Show us a human face
- Or better yet, let the human face do some of the talking
  - Coalitions
  - Policy champions

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# A variety of channels and formats

- Formal presentations at meetings
- Informal policy briefings
- Scientific papers or reports with related nontechnical summaries and policy recommendations
- Policy briefs
- Mass media: Interviews, opinion pieces by experts, news articles
- Electronic formats

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# The 1 : 4 : 25 formula

- 25-page scientific paper or report
- 4-page policy brief
- 1-page take-home message
  - Problem — solution — action: Each 35 words

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# Tips on timing

- New leaders want new ideas
- If it costs money, it must be presented at the right point in the budget cycle
- Use focusing events or help create your own
- Be ready (“lurking”) when the time is right
  - Good communication links established
  - Clear, compelling messages formulated

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# How does all this apply to NTA?

1. What is our message?
2. Who needs to get our message?
3. Who can best deliver our message?
4. How can we best communicate our message? Speaking, writing, working with the media

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# Areas for NTA policy messages

1. Include NTA in national statistical systems
2. Fertility
3. Child education and health
4. Labor income, particularly for young and old workers
5. Sources of consumption in retirement
6. Generational equity
7. Gender
8. Role of public and private sectors
9. Others?

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# Know your policy audience

- What is their level of knowledge?  
Generally, the higher the position, the less specialist knowledge
- What are their core concerns?
- And what about their demographics?  
Male/female? young/old?  
rural/urban? social-economic class  
roots? ethnicity?

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# Choose an effective messenger

Which messenger(s) are most likely to convince your policy audience of the importance of your findings and the need to take action?

You? Your boss? A collaborating organization? A policy champion? A third-party validator? A potential beneficiary?

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## Let's get to work

- Identify one of your NTA research findings and a linked policy implication
- Create a message for your finding and policy implication: One or two sentences, possibly a number
- Tell us which policymaker(s) would be able to act on your message
- Suggest who (individual or group) could deliver your policy message most effectively

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## Now let's look at a few ways to deliver your policy message

- Make an oral presentation
  - Lecture to a group
  - Elevator speech
- Write a policy brief
- (Work with the media)

# A policy presentation should be less like a lecture and more like a conversation

- Opening: A look at the beneficiaries?
- Problem and recommendation
- Methodology, but briefly
- Major findings, supported by data
- Recommendations closely linked to findings
- Cost and cost-effectiveness of recommendations

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# Less lecture...more conversation

- Prepare a warm welcome: Who are you? Why should we listen to you?
- Write out your key messages (maximum three)
- Develop comments on the messages (simple, striking numbers and graphics)
- Anticipate likely questions and prepare good answers
- Develop transitions back to your key messages

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# Create audiovisuals

- 10-minute presentation should include about:
  - 8 word slides + 4 graphic slides = 12 total
  - One idea per slide: No idea without a slide
  - Key points only—“6 x 6 rule”
  - Round off numbers
  - Don't read your slides
  - Keep technology simple
  - Avoid clutter

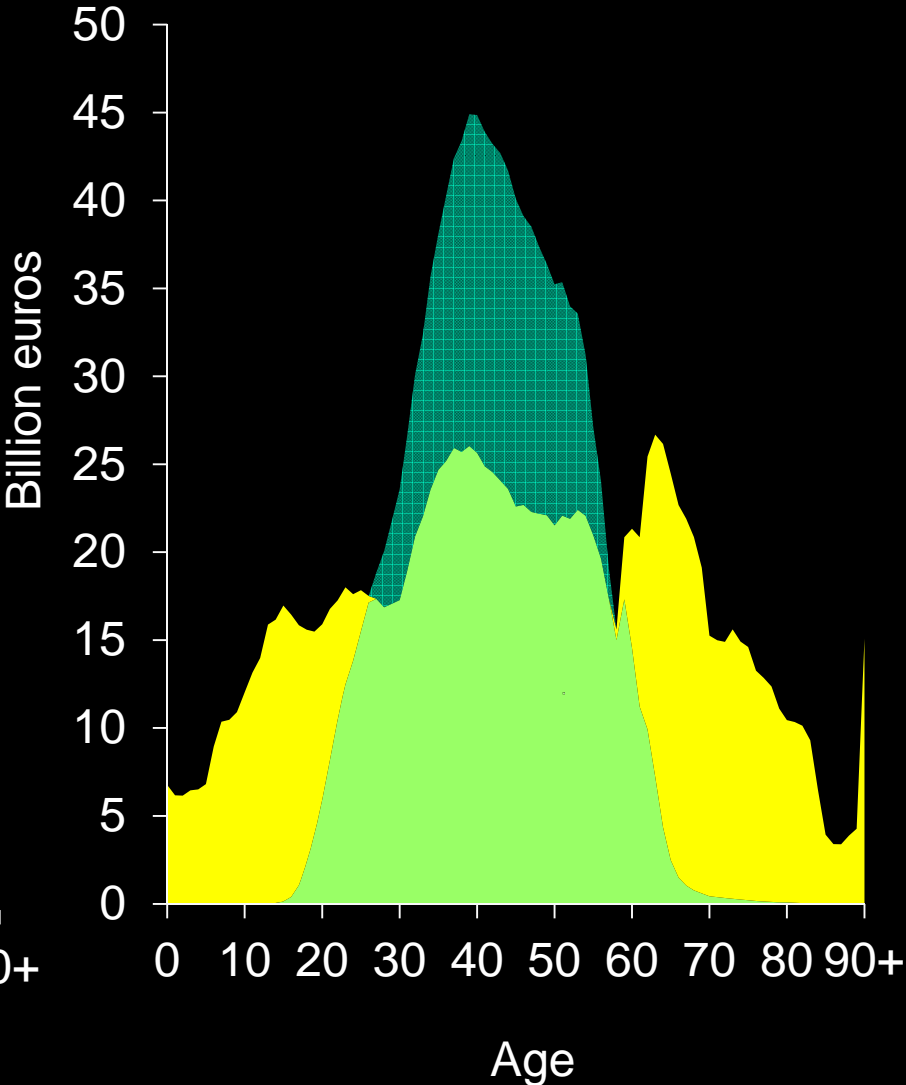
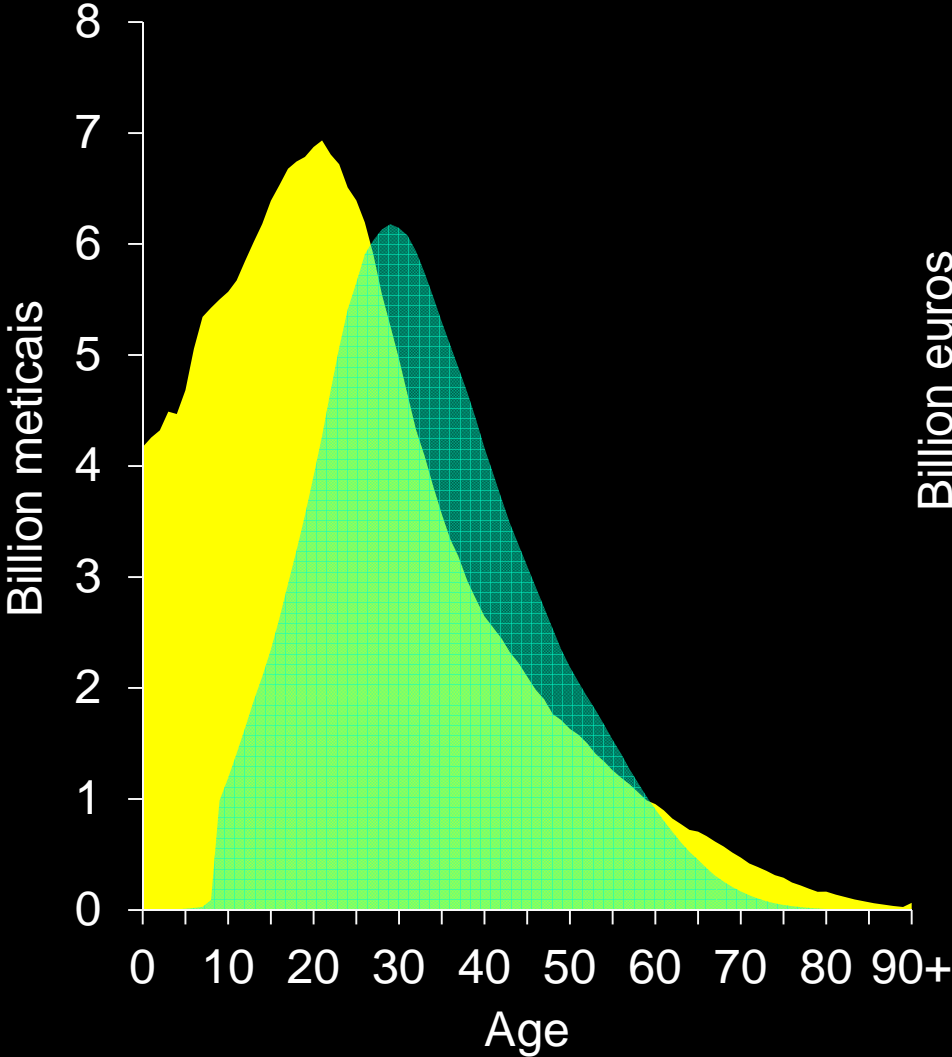
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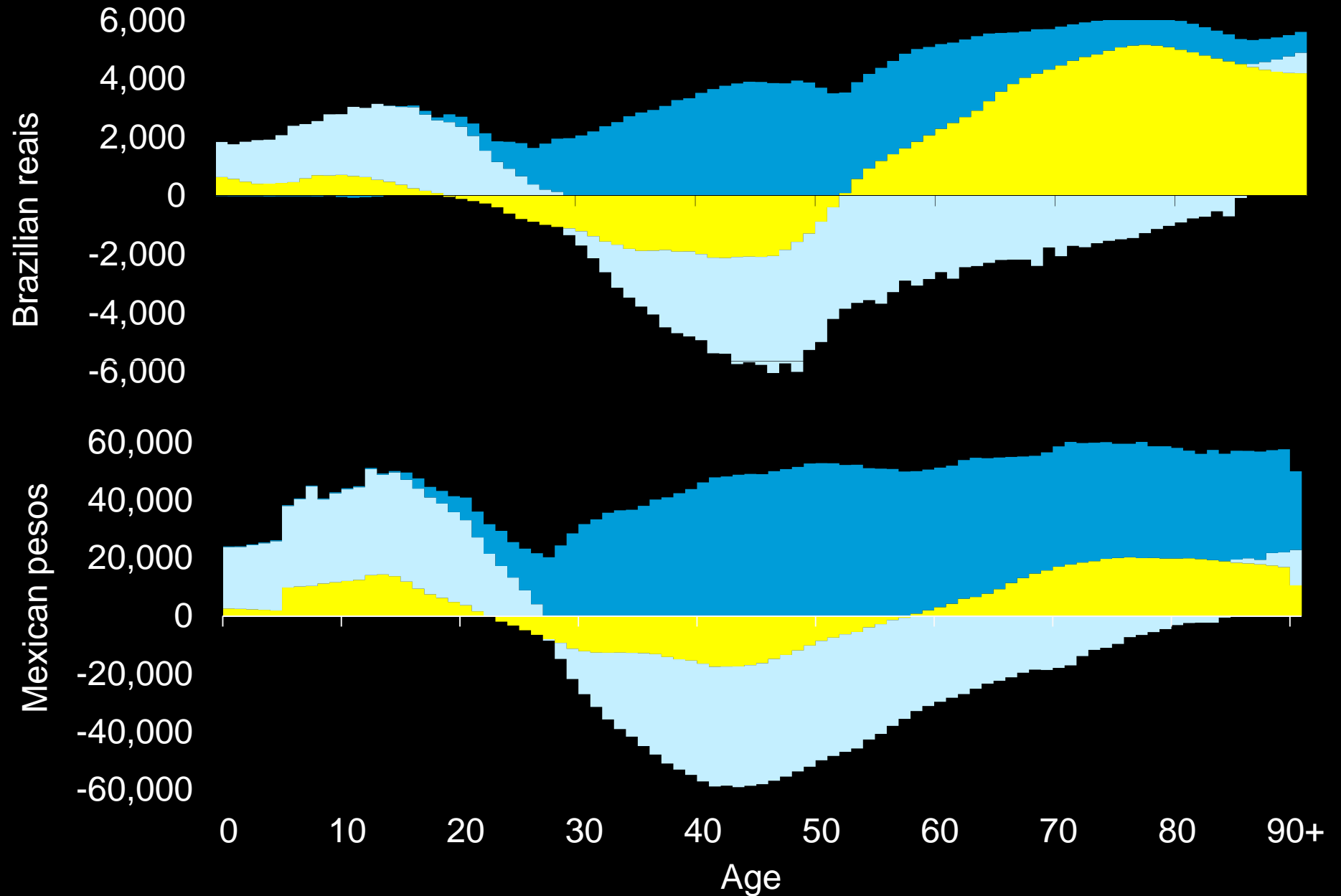
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# NTA has great graphics

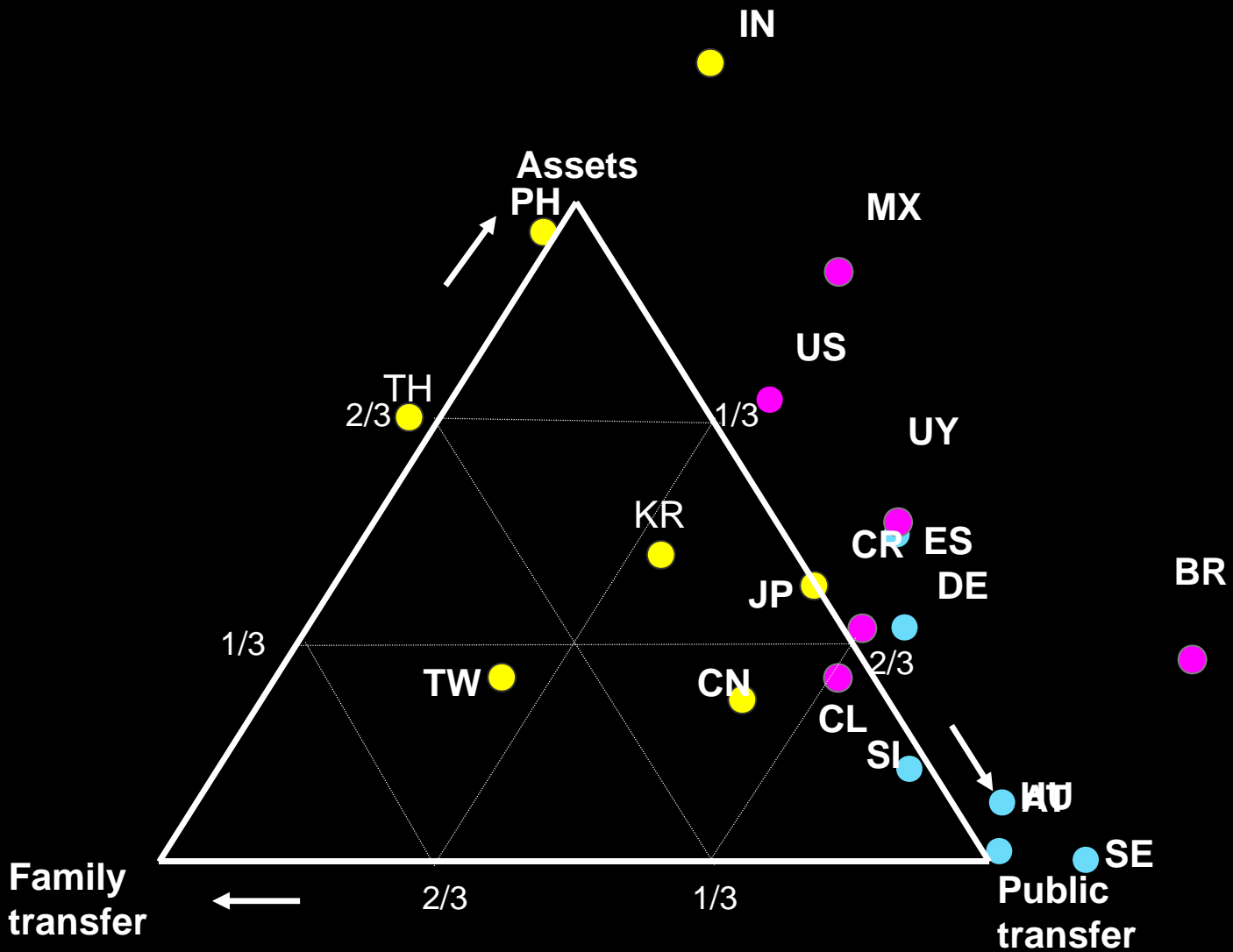




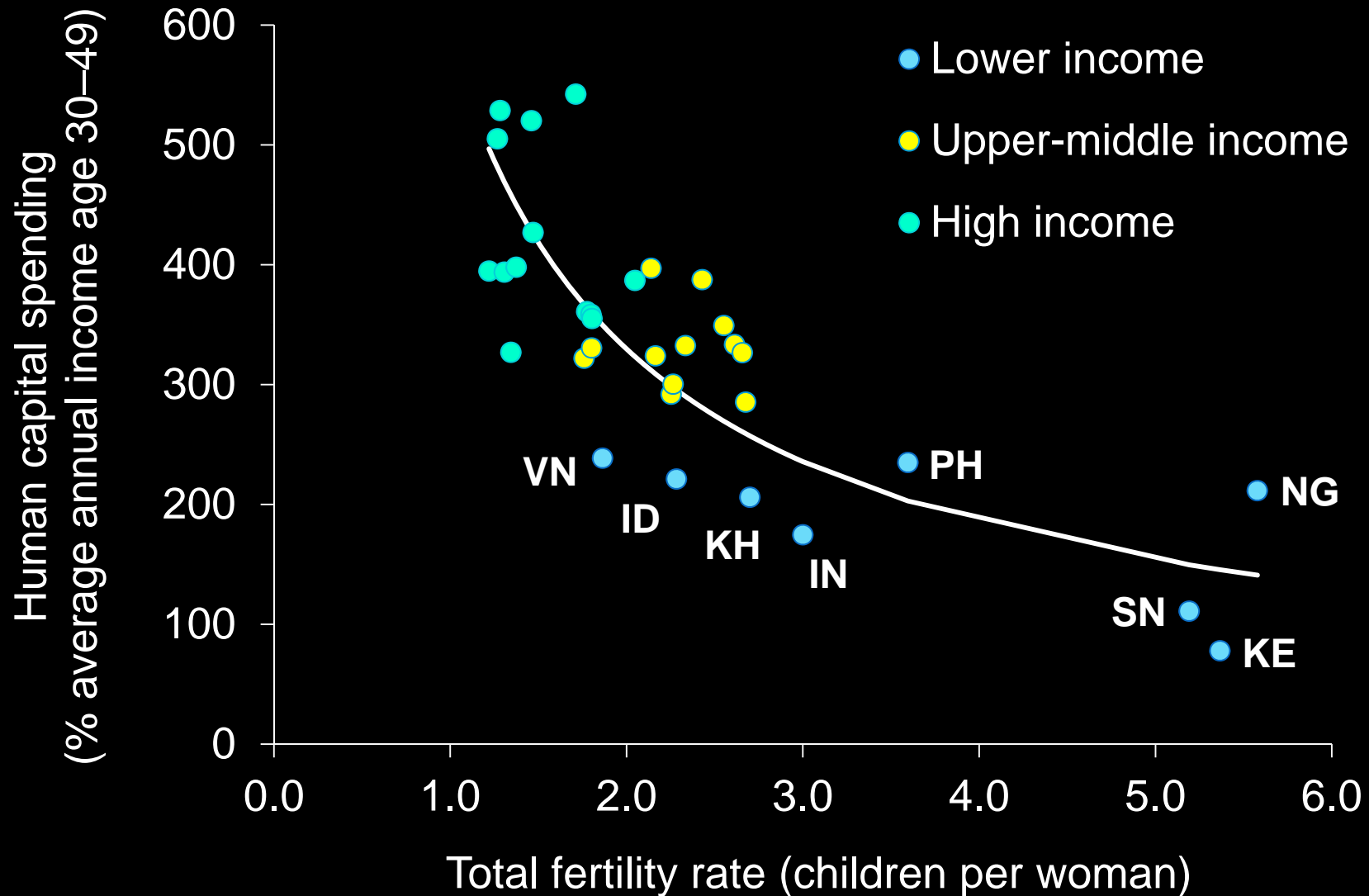
# To make comparisons



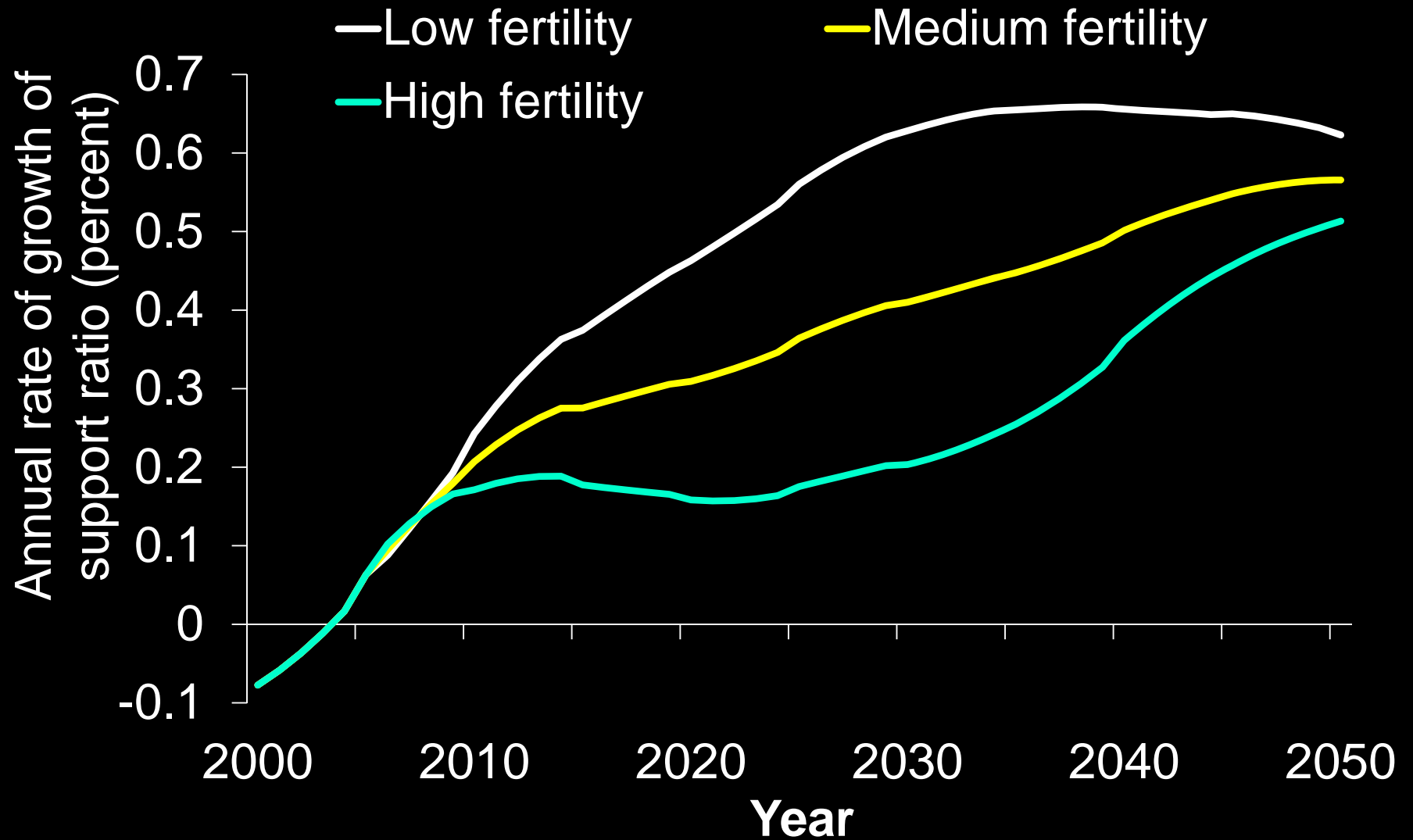
# To tell stories



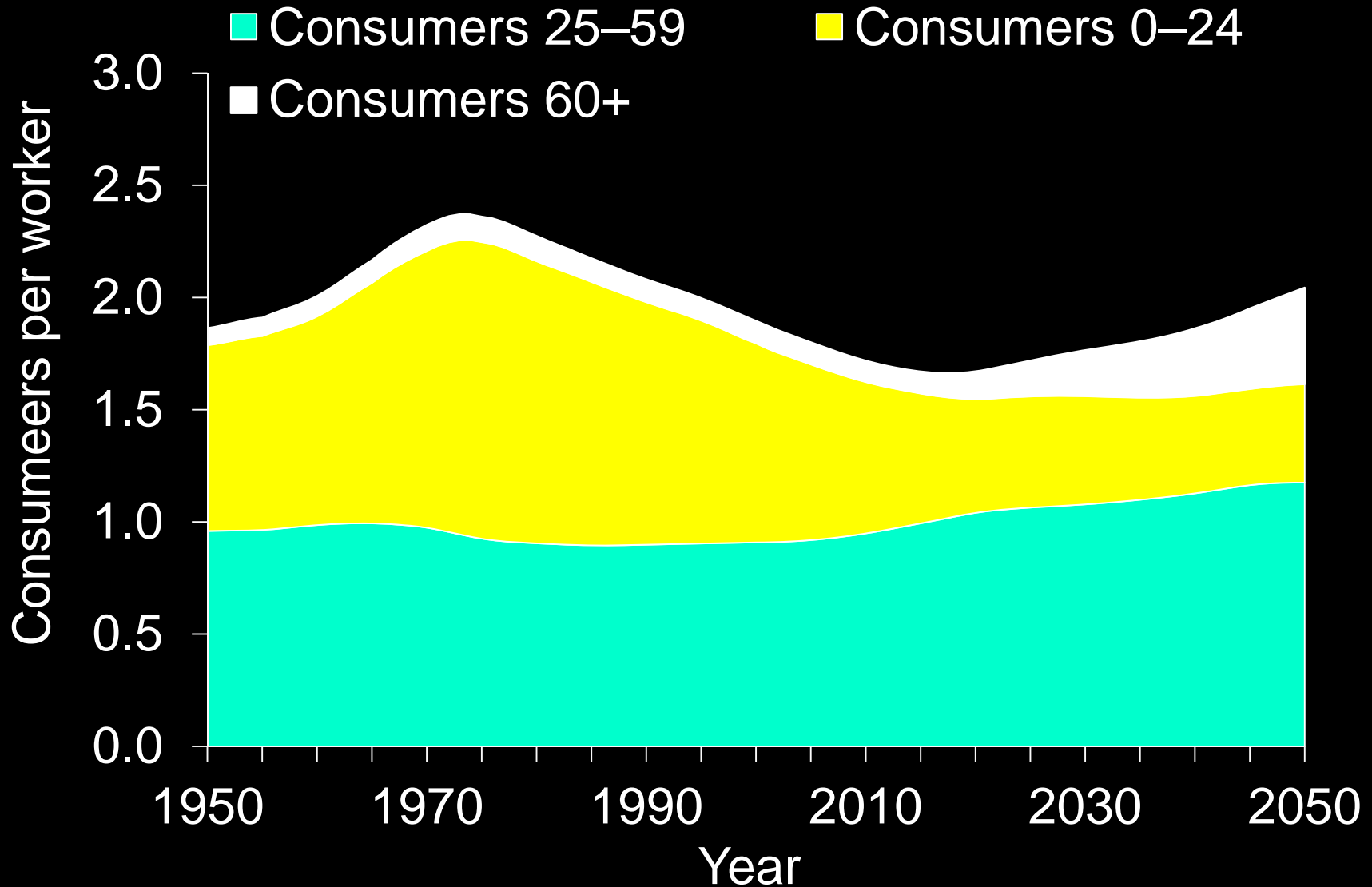
# To illustrate policy messages



# To show consequences



# To visualize the future



# End your talk with a smooth transition to Q&A

- Strong closing: What happens next?
- Effective summary slide: What do you want them to remember?
- Extra information up your sleeve for the Q&A
- Closing slide to follow the Q&A
  - What do you want them to do?
  - How do they stay in touch with you?

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# Welcome questions with enthusiasm

- Academics
  - 15-minute presentation (or more)
  - 5-minute Q&A
- Policymakers
  - 10-minute presentation
  - 10-minute Q&A (or more)
- Journalists
  - 5-minute presentation
  - 15-minute Q&A (or more)

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# Have the last word

Give them a handout after your presentation

- A factsheet that summarizes your key messages
- Includes full contact information for you and your organization

Remember, your most important goal may be for them to contact you later for more information

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# Let's get to work: The one-minute elevator speech

- Who are you and why should the policymaker should listen to you?
- What is NTA?
- Why is NTA important to this policymaker?  
Examples of some useful findings
- What do you want the policymaker to do?
- How can the policymaker get in touch with you?

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# Policy briefs

- Several short ones are better than one long one
- But only when you have something to say: don't commit to a periodical

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# What goes into a policy brief?

- Background information on why your topic is important
- Brief description of NTA project, but not at very beginning
- About four research findings
- Policy implications of the research findings
- Short list of further reading

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# A good policy brief has...

- A text that is clear and lively
  - Short sentences, short paragraphs, active verbs
  - Four pages: About 1,800 words
  - Two pages: About 900 words
- Memorable indicators
- Simple, compelling graphics
  - On first page if possible
  - One of two on each subsequent page
- An excellent design

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## Working to improve the design

- Typography: Increased type size on page 1 and space between lines on all pages
- Color: Added a third color at no extra cost
- Graphics: NTA's "secret weapon"
- Paper: Should be recycled and look recycled
- Print, pdf, photocopy?: Will your publication have to look good in black-and-white?

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## Cost of a 4-page *NTA Bulletin*: Time

- Writing and creating tables and graphics:  
Typically one month spread over three months:
  - Writer to tell story and create graphics
  - Expert to check data and messages
  - Graduate students to provide and message numbers
- Layout and printing with pre-existing design:  
two weeks

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## Cost of a 4-page *NTA Bulletin*: Money

- Design: US\$100 per page; more for new design
- Printing:
  - 250 copies = \$550
  - 500 copies = \$685
  - 1,000 copies = \$890
- Distribution:
  - Bulletin 4 (286 copies, 4 pages): \$243.10
  - Bulletin 5 (312 copies, 8 pages) \$510.33

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# They won't "get" it if they don't get it

- The *NTA Bulletin* mailing list is a work in progress, for example:
  - 99 recipients in the US
  - 1 recipient in Austria
- We need **your** help to expand and improve the mailing list

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# Look at us as a resource

- [NTA website: Communication Corner](#)
- PowerPoint basics
- Outside data that complement NTA results
- [Workshop materials from the East-West Center](#)

I would be glad to hear from you

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