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YOUTH, WOMEN, AND MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT IN AGRICULTURE AND SUPPORTING MARKETS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS AND CASE STUDIES REPORT

FEED THE FUTURE ADVANCING WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT ACTIVITY

July 7, 2020

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Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment

Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment (AWE) Task Order 7200AAI9F50034, Intended and Unintended Consequences of Market Systems Development Approaches to Youths' and Women's Inclusion in Agriculture and Supporting Markets, which was funded September 30, 2019. AWE provides consulting services for the Bureau for Food Security, Feed the Future Focused and Aligned Missions, and Global Food Security Strategy Target and Aligned Missions worldwide in the areas of gender integration, gender-sensitive design, implementation of agricultural programming, building gender capacity of personnel and programming, and knowledge management and learning.

The AWE Activity enhances gender equality and women's empowerment in agriculture programs by providing targeted technical assistance to missions, implementing partners, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, and other USAID operating units to increase women's participation, productivity, profit, and benefit in agricultural systems. AWE is implemented by EnCompass LLC with ACDI/VOCA, MarketShare Associates, and FHI 360.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AWE	Advancing Women's Empowerment (Activity)
AWEF	Arab Women's Enterprise Fund (Activity)
BDS	Business development services
BEAM	Building Effective and Accessible Markets
BRFS	Bureau for Resilience and Food Security
CLA	Collaborating, learning, and adapting
CN	Consolidation network
DCED	Donor Committee for Enterprise Development
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DFS	Digital financial services
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DYNAMIC	Driving Youth-led New Agribusiness and Microenterprise in Northern Uganda (Activity)
FSD	Financial Sector Deepening (Activity)
GESI	Gender equality and social inclusion
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
MSD	Market systems development
MDF	Market Development Facility (Activity)
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
PE	Peer educator
PEEP	Punjab Enabling Environment Project (Activity)
PRISMA	Promoting Rural Incomes through Support for Markets in Agriculture (Activity)
PYD	Positive youth development
RAIN	Revitalizing Agriculture Incomes and New Markets (Activity)
RDC	Rice and Diversified Crops (Activity)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (Switzerland)
SEEP	Small Enterprise and Education Promotion Network
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency (Sweden)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEE	Women's economic empowerment
WEinSPIRE	Women Empowerment in South Punjab through Investment in Rural Economy
WINDS	Women Investment in Networking of Dairy Sector
YLA	Youth Leadership for Agriculture (Activity)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Attention to the inclusion of youth and women in market systems development (MSD) is gaining traction around the world as part of work to strengthen inclusive agriculture-led growth, food security, poverty reduction, and improved employment. In recent years, at least 15 agriculture-related MSD Activities valued at a combined half a billion US dollars have targeted women, and increasingly youth. Although the context for this work varies greatly, establishing the business case for youth's and women's inclusion has been central to these efforts. Until now, however, little has been known about the breadth of tactics, successes, and pitfalls of this emerging work.

To bridge this knowledge gap and inform further research and practice, in 2019-2020, the Feed the Future Advancing Women's Empowerment (AWE) Program undertook a groundbreaking **landscape analysis** and four **case studies** to explore the intended and unintended consequences of MSD approaches to youth's and women's inclusion in agriculture and supporting markets to understand more about:

- What gender- and youth-specific constraints and opportunities MSD programs in agriculture and supporting markets have identified
- Whether and how MSD approaches have been able to address gender and youth issues
- What the impacts or outcomes of gender- and youth-targeted MSD approaches have been, including results, shortcomings, and positive and negative unintended consequences

Results reveal evidence that MSD programs can: (1) meaningfully include women and youth in MSD through both mainstreamed and targeted approaches, (2) overcome constraints and pursue opportunities that foster win-win benefits for and with women, youth, the private sector and other market actors; (3) promote at least some social norms change to close gender and age gaps within the scope or related to the specific objectives of the projects, including by pursuing non-traditional (adult male-dominated) opportunities; and (4) involve risks that should be anticipated and addressed as power relations and markets shift with inclusive MSD trial and error.

While inclusion is implied as a pillar of MSD, some programs are more intentional or targeted in their efforts to generate benefits for youth and women. Consequently, implementers must take care to design programming in a way that prevents potential negative unintended consequences, including to avoid inadvertently strengthening dominant market actors in ways that further neglect marginalized groups or put women and girls at increased risk of gender-based violence. Moreover, it is clear that MSD programs in themselves do not satisfy the breadth of youth developmental needs; however, they may be sufficient to meet the most pressing ones. This has important normative implications for planning youth-inclusive MSD.

Notable gaps in MSD programming include the lack of focus on the intersections between youth and gender and a lack of approaches specific to young women's inclusion. Furthermore, younger youth cohorts are not well served by MSD Activities, with market actors lacking clear incentives to facilitate opportunities that respond to younger youths' developmental needs. Where implementers attempt to facilitate opportunities for younger youth to develop skills and assets, they tend to use higher-intensity facilitation tactics to achieve this.

Methodology. The **landscape analysis** aimed to identify the universe of cases based on a set of criteria. The research team reviewed 324 documents from 15 agricultural and supporting MSD Activities. Documents were sourced directly from implementing partners and complemented with online research. Implementing partners reviewed and validated the findings and conclusions.

AWE further undertook four **case studies** to delve deeper into key issues and questions that arose during the landscape analysis. Activities were selected based on the opportunity to explore key learning themes, representation of at least two youth Activities and one Feed the Future Activity, and a range of locations and markets, distinct gender and age challenges, and intended and unintended consequences of the Activity, among other criteria. The case studies focus on four learning themes examined through document review and key informant interviews with 18 implementing partner staff and market actors across five Activities.

KEY FINDINGS: LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

The 15 selected Activities represent a diverse array of approaches, influences, budgets, and geographical, cultural and economic contexts: four USAID Feed the Future, three UK Department for International Development (DFID), two Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), one other USAID, one Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), one Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), one joint SIDA and DFID, one joint USAID and the Walmart Foundation, and one from the Mastercard Foundation. The total budget of this collection of Activities is half a billion dollars, with individual budgets varying from \$7 to \$125 million. They represent interventions in 17 countries with a concentration in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. The countries represented were 54 percent lower middle income (12), 27 percent low income (6), and 18 percent upper middle income (4). The full list of selected Activities for the landscape analysis is included in [Annex I: Project List](#).

AWE collected the findings from a wide variety of Activities in terms of geography, facilitation intensity, and inclusion intentionality, which, between them, represent early and promising learning from MSD Activities. The selected findings below are organized around the Activity life cycle (planning, implementation, adaptation, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning) to guide implementers on the decisions and action points to integrate gender and youth intentionally throughout implementation.

PLANNING FOR INCLUSION

- In reviewing initial planning and design of women and/or youth inclusion in MSD activities, the research team found that **intentionality at inception is important to achieve more rapid outcomes for women and youth** and drives internal buy-in for women's and youth's commercial importance.
- Less knowledge exists on the use of MSD approaches to engage youth. Generally, **youth-inclusive MSD lags behind women's inclusion**. This is potentially because dynamics behind women's inclusion have been studied extensively and have evolved over a longer period; resources for integrating youth in MSD are largely non-existent.
- Conducting **youth and gender assessments and analyses** garners **valuable, generic insights** for partners into women's and youth's opportunities and constraints to access market opportunities. More targeted, participatory youth and women-focused research at the outset of planning supports more sensitivity among staff to get behind MSD approaches that target inclusion.

- In terms of approaches that can be used to determine the constraints and opportunities in specific agriculture and supporting market systems, MSD programs tend to start with opportunities in sectors and roles where women and youth already are. Over time, and with analysis and reflection, **opportunities can be explored in non-traditional (adult male-dominated) sectors and address root causes of women's and/or youth's exclusion.** This includes support sectors that are not typically included in MSD Activities, roles with low female participation, and functions in the value chain with limited representation of women and youth.
- **Flexibility, iteration, and innovation** are required for implementers and their partners to identify and facilitate opportunities for youth and women as markets shift and pivots are needed when tactics for inclusion in specific contexts are tried and need adjustment. This means starting with a theory of change and other traditional planning tools and being prepared to test and adjust assumptions.

IMPLEMENTATION

- **Establishing a business case for youth's and women's inclusion is the most commonly cited tactic** to develop market opportunities for women and youth; yet, Activities struggle to make the case for women and, to a greater extent, youth. However, few Activities reported on the scale or efficiency of business case tactics across sectors to achieve widespread and systemic market changes for women's and youth's inclusion.
- Implementers constantly made choices about the **intensity of the facilitation approaches** they employed. In a few cases, a combination of approaches, including direct provision and facilitation, was used as a “hybrid approach.” Furthermore, the use of high-intensity facilitative approaches was more common in Activities that target both youth and women, or when women are targeted in a sub-project.
- While many interventions address key constraints, **it remains challenging for Activities to undertake improvements at the systems level** and tackle root causes that drive the gaps between dominant and marginalized groups.

STAFFING AND ADAPTATION

- **Collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) drives iteration and inclusion**, not only in program design and implementation, but also in shifting who drives change over time. Pivots due to adaptive management approaches have an outsized impact on youth and gender inclusion. Evidence of adaptive management was found across most programs and could be the catalyst for either the launch or expansion of youth's and women's inclusion.
- While most Activities (80 percent) started off with the intention of including women at the outset, if they could not reach women's inclusion targets under mainstreaming approaches, they often **developed women-specific initiatives as a response tactic.** Organizational structures often evolved over time in assigning responsibility for inclusion, reflecting the need for increased level of effort at levels closer to market actors.
- **Implementer staff who interact with market actor partners need to use key soft skills to effectively make the business case**—for example, knowing how to approach incentives and negotiate and articulate core concepts and principles of MSD and inclusion.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING (MEL)

- **Market actors are essential to MEL efforts in MSD programming.** Most of the Activities in this study relied on market actors and partners to collect and report data relevant

to Activity indicators and results. **Activities that allowed market actors to own data management and decision-making processes accelerated buy-in and win-win outcomes.**

- In addition to adaptive management approaches, **ongoing monitoring and specialized learning studies** conducted throughout implementation allowed Activities to observe system shifts, quickly perceive trends associated with known risks, and tweak approaches to deliver better results. Activities that employed ongoing monitoring and learning tactics were often aware of the benefits, indicating that they gave “*much needed clarity as to the efficacy and impact of the intervention.*”

KEY FINDINGS: CASE STUDIES

Key findings below were common to some or all of the Activities examined in the following case studies:

1) ÉLAN RDC: Advancing Women's Roles in Agricultural Market Systems, 2) YLA and DYNAMIC: Facilitation Intensity in Youth MSD in Uganda; 3) RisiAlbania: Inclusive Partner Engagement Strategies; and 4) PRISMA: Developing an Effective Business Case for Inclusive Private Sector Partnerships.

Approaching the partnership as a business venture is effective for implementing partners working with private-sector partners to generate win-win opportunities with women and youth. The private sector will not likely engage in inclusion interventions or activities outside of the scope of their business activities at the outset of the relationship, but may look to local civil society organizations to fill gaps in the sector that facilitate inclusion.

MSD programs are not comprehensive women's empowerment and youth development programs. Donor influence on program design and expectations of desired outcomes beyond women and/or youth market participation targets must be reconciled with MSD approaches. Some components prescribed in donor solicitations (sexual and reproductive health, vocational skills, life skills, formal education) may not respond to pre-existing or potential services in each market and, therefore, encourage higher levels of facilitation to comply with contractual obligations. This higher intensity facilitation, however, may be needed to trigger the uptake of market opportunities by women, youth, and businesses and can be tapered off over time. More study on the combinations of tactics is needed.

Selecting the right sectors, particularly in supporting markets, to achieve outcomes for male and female youth is highly important during Activity design. This often goes beyond looking at where male and female youth currently participate and requires assessing end markets and value chain upgrades that can bring about specific opportunities for youth. **Consistent and strategic use of data is needed to prove and improve the business case for upgrading women's roles in market systems** and facilitate improvements in program performance and impact.

Monitoring intervention outcomes and sharing results with private sector and other partners allows them to see the benefits in concrete quantitative terms. This often solidifies partners' belief in the intervention and ultimately, builds their accountability for inclusion results.

Internal capacity development and staff ownership are critical for operationalizing successful gender strategies and approaches. Staff buy-in and ownership need to happen before partners can be expected to buy into inclusion interventions.

When presented with off-farm, market-led roles as agents or salaried employees, **youth are willing and eager to work in the agriculture sector**. Discounting inputs, linking youth to markets, and incentivizing off-farm market-driven skills development and opportunities are the primary intervention areas. Youth engaged in production compose the bulk of Activity participants and will continue to do so.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Donors and implementing partners should dedicate resources to better understanding the constraints and barriers specific to young women and men in MSD in agriculture and supporting markets, and the ways in which MSD and broader youth development programming are combined to achieve young people's market inclusion at scale. This has important normative implications for both donors and implementing partners. Achieving the impacts and benefits of MSD approaches with young people at scale may at times require high-intensity facilitation to support youth development objectives that are synergistic to the achievement of MSD objectives and need to be planned for and evaluated.
- 2) Donors should develop guidance to support implementing partners' development of tools for planning, measurement, and reporting of youth's (the most needed) and women's benefits, risks, and challenges in MSD.
- 3) Implementers of MSD programs should either recruit staff with skills for women's and youth's inclusion in markets or train staff early on. When staff have the responsibility and capacity to design and "sell" inclusive interventions, the Activity develops effective, sustainable partnerships that can equitably benefit women and men.
- 4) Donors should develop a minimum requirement of formative analyses for women's and youth's inclusion, and expect Activities to use adaptive management approaches to deepen women's and youth's inclusion on an iterative basis over a long period of time. Amid dynamic markets, monitoring is essential to confirm the business case holds true, determine how well expected results are realized, gauge potential sustainability, and adapt strategies and tactics to optimize results and sustainability.
- 5) Implementing partners should aim to use MSD not only as a means to facilitate win-win opportunities involving women and youth in traditional sectors and roles, but also to pursue those in non-traditional sectors and roles as well to leverage their Activity as a means for transformative norms change.
- 6) Implementing partners need to ensure risks are anticipated and planned for. This includes risk identification in both formative research and ongoing monitoring, and risk mitigation planning that is well-articulated and integrated into results chains, intervention plans, and other planning documents. Specialized learning studies and complexity-aware MEL methods can help Activities harvest unintended consequences (those not originally anticipated and planned for).

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

Although it can be read from top to bottom, this landscape analysis report notes that certain themes reemerge throughout. These icons are used to allow the reader to quickly identify other areas where a key theme has implications:

			
Leadership and staffing concerns contributing to a culture or capacity for inclusion	Adaptive management or CLA catalyzing improvements or learning toward inclusion	Varying levels of intensity allowing implementers flexibility for inclusion	More analysis available on women's than on youth's inclusion (male or female)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This landscape analysis looks at Activities across agriculture and supporting markets, funded by a range of donors that use different naming conventions. The authors selected terms to maintain consistency, and promote clarity and ease of reading throughout the report. The following terms are used, many of which were sourced from the [Beam Exchange](#) glossary:

Activity: An Activity carries out an intervention, or set of interventions, typically through a contract, grant, or agreement with a donor.

Facilitation: Implementing partners' attempt to work through local actors to stimulate more sustainable change, minimizing an Activity's direct role. Activities employ facilitation with varied levels of intensity, ranging from low (no or minimum subsidy and low levels of direction) to high (heavy subsidies and ample direction).

Gender Mainstreaming: A strategy to achieve the goal of women's equality by ensuring that women's perspectives are central to all activities throughout the project cycle.

*Note on use of terms **women** and **gender** in this report: While the original intention was to address gender and youth intersectionally, the activities reviewed more often group participants as "women and/or youth."*

Partners use the terms gender and gender mainstreaming, yet most Activities refer only to women in relation to implementation and targets, without reference to age and gender in terms of strategy and analysis.

Inclusive MSD: Market systems development approaches that engage and benefit a range of actors, including the poor, women, girls, boys, men, ethnic minorities, and/or other marginalized groups who are often excluded—or even exploited—by traditional market systems.

Non-Traditional: Used to describe (1) **roles** underrepresented by women in traditional sectors and/or the household, based on the intervention, and (2) any role in a **sector** underrepresented by women. The U.S. Department of Labor defines a non-traditional sector as that where 25 percent or less of those employed across the field are women.

Supporting markets: Include a broad range of financial and nonfinancial products and services that provide viable sources of assistance to value chain actors. These include financial services (e.g. lending), cross-cutting services (e.g. business development services), and sector-specific services (e.g. veterinary services). While

supporting markets are important for value chain growth and competitiveness, they are not always a component of a value chain project, but rather can be sectors in need of strengthening in their own right. For example, an Activity in Pakistan targeting the livestock value chain may choose to focus much of its efforts on creating a competitive veterinary industry that is responsive to the needs of small-scale female livestock producers.

Targeted: Activities that intentionally include youth and/or women in isolation from another group, or as a standalone sub-project for reasons that include demographics, political imperative (e.g., concern for increasing rates of youth unemployment), and/or the presence of disproportionate barriers in the agriculture market system.

Women: Females of child-bearing age and older. Age is not specified by implementing partners, but references to pregnancy and maternity are found.

Youth: Young women and men within an age range defined by the Activity, country, or donor. The age range can extend from 10 to 35 years of age.

INTRODUCTION

DEFINING MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

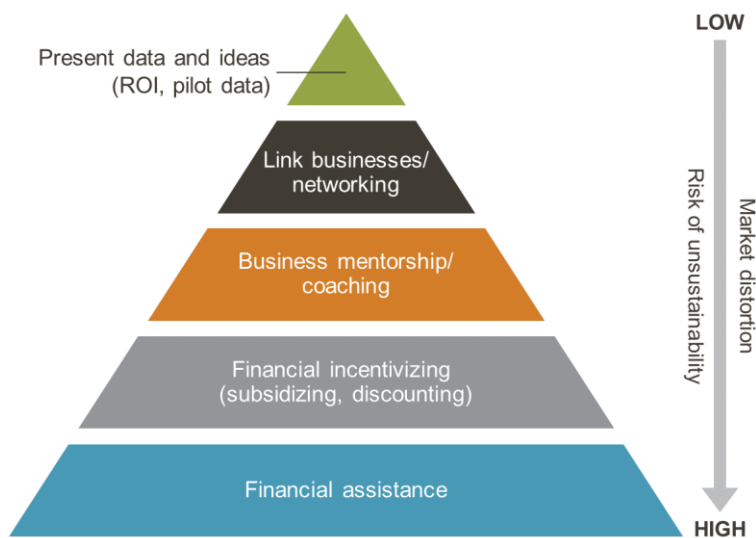
The market systems development (MSD) approach involves targeting the root causes of poor market system performance to enable market actors to achieve inclusive growth. The MSD approach to strengthening agriculture and supporting markets is becoming a new standard means to improve food security and address unemployment and poverty. Using this approach, **implementation partners do not intervene directly in the market system, but prioritize working through market actors.** MSD Activities seek to achieve high-level changes by fostering more competitive, inclusive, and resilient market systems.¹ Within these three broad areas, Activities define more specific targets and goals, tailored to donor priorities and the implementation context. Local actors' ownership is key to systems change using this approach.

The MSD theory of change is:

If the poor depend on markets as both consumers and producers, **then** strengthening markets—especially the agriculture sector—will help secure higher incomes and access to goods and services, and ultimately, provide a sustainable pathway out of poverty.

To achieve this, an implementing partner incentivizes market actors of all types (private, public, nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], and community-based organizations) to develop a commercial interest in a market-strengthening change or initiative. This process is called **market facilitation**²—a key feature of MSD programming.

Exhibit 1: A Spectrum of Market Facilitation Tactics



¹ Campbell. 2014. USAID's Framework for Inclusive Market Systems Development

² For more on facilitation, see <https://www.marketlinks.org/good-practice-center/value-chain-wiki/facilitation> and <https://beamexchange.org/guidance/vision/facilitation-role/>.

Working through local actors to stimulate more sustainable change minimizes an implementer's direct role over time. Activities employ facilitation with varying levels of intensity, ranging from low (no or minimum subsidy, low levels of Activity direction/oversight, etc.) to high (heavy subsidies and project direction). Facilitation involves creating a business case for investment, and engaging market actors in co-creating strategies and interventions that align with both Activity's and the market actor's objectives. The result of this collaboration is called a **win-win opportunity**.

Inclusive MSD intentionally considers marginalized populations, such as youth, women, ethnic minorities, people with various abilities, and other groups. Individual Activities may have **objectives (or intended consequences)** for inclusion that are shaped by donor expectations, solicitation objectives, and the intervention context (e.g., sectors, market actors' relevant knowledge and perceptions, current participation and results among marginalized populations, etc.) as well as implementers' institutional policies for fostering inclusion. Consequently, implementers must take care to design programming in a way that prevents potential negative **unintended consequences**. For example, strengthening dominant market actors in ways that further neglect marginalized groups or put women at increased risk of gender-based violence.

This landscape analysis report and accompanying case studies and visualizations seek to improve understanding of how the promise of MSD has been delivered to date for youth and women in the agriculture sector and supporting markets in various geographical and economic contexts, and on behalf of implementers with different theories of change.

AUDIENCE

The report's primary intended audiences are implementers and donors of MSD projects, and all implementers of youth's or women's economic empowerment programming in the agriculture sector and/or supporting markets.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

BACKGROUND

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) engaged the Feed the Future Advancing Women's Empowerment (AWE) Program to conduct a landscape analysis of MSD Activities to examine the degree to which Activities have taken age and sex into account separately or through integrated approaches. The purpose of this research is to increase knowledge on the strategies MSD Activities have employed to intentionally target female and male youth and women in agriculture and supporting markets, either within a targeted Activity or through mainstreaming efforts. There is no known compilation and analysis of information on the prevalence and nature of emerging youth- and women-targeted MSD within existing literature on MSD, and thus this work begins to bridge that gap. Whereas the landscape analysis meant to capture the universe of Activities implementing inclusive MSD, case studies were further undertaken on a number of the Activities identified to delve deeper into the modes of age- and gender-sensitive market facilitation, factors that influence them, and related outcomes (see [Section B](#)), and to develop suggestions for further research ([Annex 3](#)), and programming recommendations to improve inclusive MSD approaches (Recommendations).

RESEARCH DESIGN

The AWE team applied a "market systems lens" to the landscape analysis, which means analyzing where Activities engaged key market actors (NGOs, the public and private sectors, male and female youth, and women and men) and where market actors facilitated or hindered market inclusion of women and youth in agriculture and supporting markets. This entailed determining where incentives were aligned between women and youth participants and market actors, categorizing different approaches relative to market actors, and detailing achievements and challenges. The landscape analysis focused on women and youth (males and females of different ages, ranging from 10 to 35) as distinct populations in agriculture-focused MSD Activities.

LEARNING QUESTIONS

The specific learning questions are:

KEY QUESTION	SUB QUESTIONS
1. What opportunities and constraints have MSD programs identified for women and/or youth in agriculture and supporting markets?	a) What tools and approaches were used to determine the constraints and opportunities that exist in specific agriculture and supporting market systems, and in particular, for youth and women within these systems? b) What collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) approaches (e.g., adaptive management) or other mechanisms were used to determine constraints and opportunities based on project learning? c) What are the constraints and opportunities for youth and/or women within market systems? d) When did MSD programs identify women- and youth-specific opportunities and constraints over the life of the project, and how did that affect learning and application?
2. In which ways have MSD program approaches attempted to facilitate win-win market opportunities with a focus on women and/or youth?	a) What MSD approaches did programs implement to address opportunities and constraints to youth's and women's market inclusion, and why (where information exists)? b) What limitations were documented in MSD approaches to address youth's and women's needs alongside those of the private sector and other stakeholders?
3. What were the impacts or outcomes of MSD approaches that focus on women and youth (e.g., achievements, shortcomings, and positive and negative unintended consequences)?	a) How do MSD programs measure impact and outcomes related to youth and women? b) To what extent are non-financial outcomes and impact on women and youth measured? c) What examples of MSD approaches appear to be effective or ineffective at addressing specific youth's and/or women's issues? d) Which MSD approaches with youth and/or women demonstrated potential to reach scale and sustainability (as defined within the report)? e) What positive, negative, or other trends did MSD programs report in measuring impact and outcomes related to youth and/or women? f) What examples of unintended (positive or negative) outcomes and impacts on women and/or youth did MSD programs capture?

METHODOLOGY

ACTIVITY SELECTION

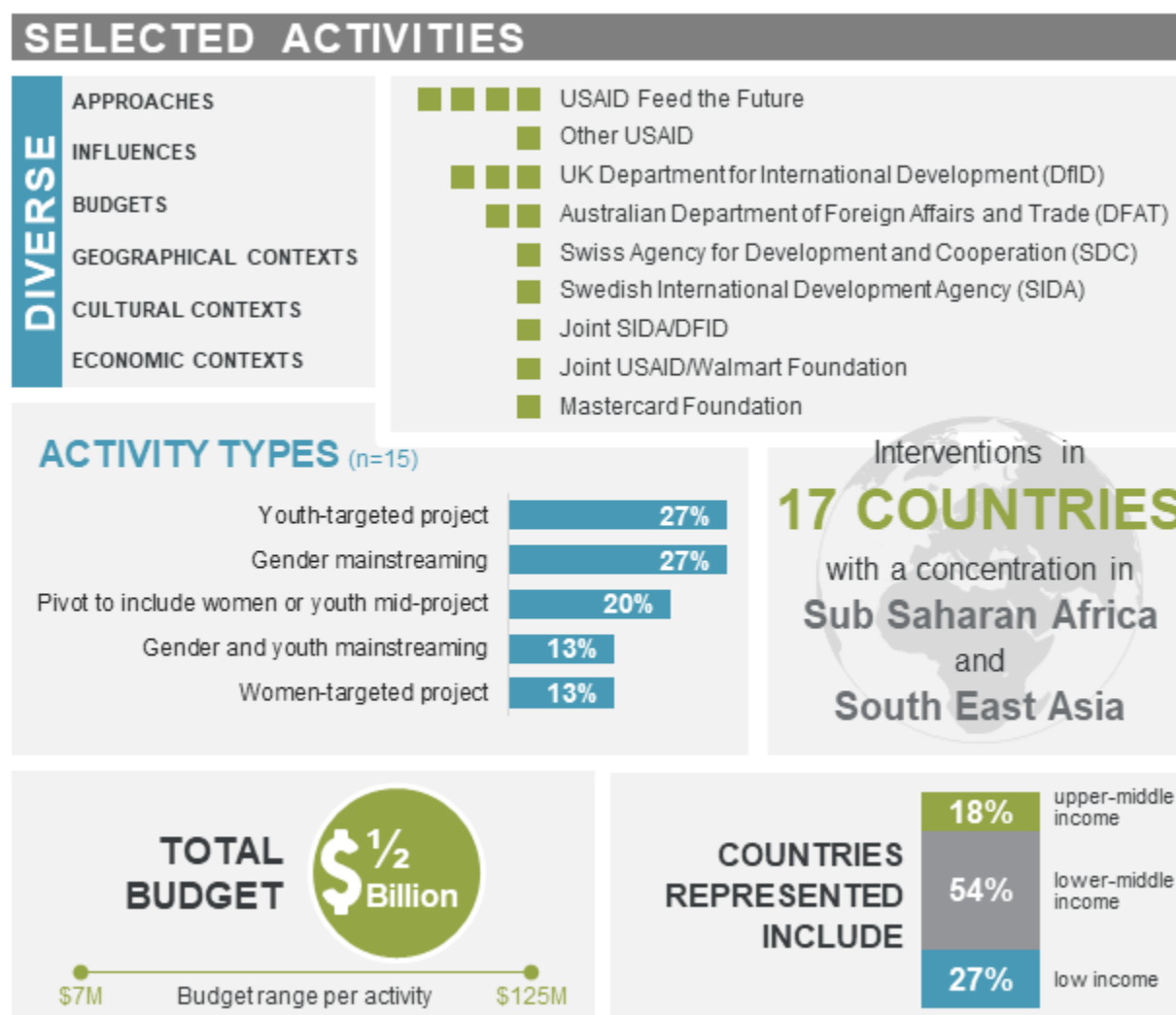
In December 2019, the AWE team harvested an initial pool of 32 potential Activities for the landscape analysis that were sourced through:

- The Building Effective and Accessible Markets (BEAM) Exchange's program index and evidence map
- Expert-led recommendations (including direct email outreach to several well-connected leaders in the market systems space)
- Activities harvested by an AWE research study focused on women's roles in agriculture beyond production
- Direct consultation with USAID youth, gender, and market systems specialists via a jointly populated spreadsheet, and an in-person Activity harvesting and prioritization workshop

The AWE team and USAID staff jointly curated the selected 15 Activities out of the initial pool based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to learning questions
- Availability of sufficient information to determine whether the approach aims to benefit and/or empowers women and youth
- Use of diverse approaches (direct or indirect) to engage youth and women
- Currently implemented or has ended within the past 10 years
- Representation of geographic diversity

The 15 selected Activities represent a diverse array of approaches, influences, budgets, and geographical, cultural and economic contexts: four USAID Feed the Future, one other USAID, three UK Department for International Development (DFID), two Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), one Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), one Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), one joint SIDA and DFID, one joint USAID and the Walmart Foundation, and one from the Mastercard Foundation. The total budget of this collection of Activities is half a billion dollars; individual budgets vary from \$7 to \$125 million. They represent interventions in 17 countries with a concentration in Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia. The countries represented were 54 percent lower middle income (12), 27 percent low income (6), and 18 percent upper middle income (4). The full list of selected Activities for the landscape analysis is included in [Annex 1: Project List](#).



DATA COLLECTION

Between December 2019 and January 2020, the AWE team contacted implementing partners and carried out an online search to source documents related to the 15 Activities selected. The scan included the BEAM Exchange, the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED), the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), the Agrilinks, Marketlinks, and Small Enterprise and Education Promotion Network (SEEP) websites, and Activities' and implementing partners' websites. Selected documents reviewed are found in [Annex 2](#).

DOCUMENT REVIEW

The AWE team reviewed and categorized 324 documents, using an Excel-based data analysis process of extracting and tagging document content corresponding to the learning questions. The team updated and modified the Excel spreadsheet as information was uncovered to highlight unexpected findings. Tagged content was analyzed across and within Activities to determine the prevalence of a phenomenon and attribute the outcomes of actions to an Activity, respectively. Analysis of the data in the spreadsheet formed the basis of the findings and conclusions.

Following the tagging phase, the team transcribed secondary data into a research collection sheet and reviewed them to bring forth trends that cut across projects and note any outlier activity. The research team discussed these trends, then extracted illustrative examples. The research team shared preliminary trends with the USAID activity manager during an initial finding debrief in January 2020, and gauged interest in specific areas for deeper analysis. Finally, findings (based on the facts and trends collected in response to learning questions), conclusions (summation of the findings), and recommendations (course of action in line with findings and conclusions) were developed.

LIMITATIONS

The most significant limitations to the study were:

- Availability of required documentation during the research period; the existence of data relating to the learning questions; and based solely on documentation, the ability to determine the extent to which specific groups benefitted from a given intervention, due to poor disaggregation of data by age and/or sex
- Lack of opportunity to make quantitative comparisons because of differing Activity timelines, uneven reporting formats, and non-standardized monitoring and evaluation systems
- Lack of opportunity to deeply analyze trends across MSD tactics because there was often a lack of details about why Activities chose to employ tactics, how they implemented those tactics, and how successful the tactics were at achieving outcomes related to women and youth; while the AWE research team highlighted reported MSD tactics used to engage youth and women in this analysis, this is not a comprehensive inventory
- Difficulty in determining how an MSD approach was specifically related to or shaped by inclusion goals because Activities span diverse contexts and donors with differing mandates for MSD and inclusion
- Difficulty in generalizing or capturing trends because of small sample size and implementation time periods. Activity start dates span an 8-year period, during which there have been many changes in donor mandates for MSD and inclusion, and the context affecting inclusion and MSD uptake and outcomes

FINDINGS

The landscape analysis report findings are organized in four sections related to project cycle phases: planning, implementation, adaptation, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL). While researching the learning questions, available data overwhelmingly clustered around these themes, and further sub-grouped around programs that mainstreamed gender or those that target women and youth specifically. Each finding below includes a brief description, followed by illustrative and explanatory examples. Although these examples do not represent the entirety of the data reviewed to support findings, they were selected as the most illustrative and representative in relation to each finding.

I. PLANNING FOR INCLUSION

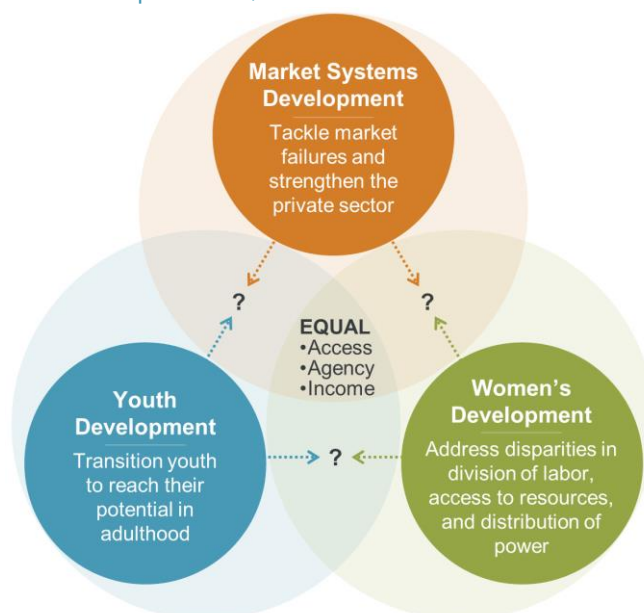
This section reports on the type and quality of initial planning methodologies and analyses used to inform design to include women and/or youth in MSD Activities. The findings in this section demonstrate that intentionality at the outset is important—it leads to more rapid outcomes for women and youth, and drives internal buy-in that women and youth are of commercial importance.

Finding 1: Not all Activities commence with an implementer- or donor-led vision and/or rationale for youth's and women's inclusion in MSD.



While a few Activities, such as Market Development Facility (MDF) and RisiAlbania, had a strong vision and rationale for inclusion of youth and/or women in MSD from the start, this was not the norm. Most articulated a strategy in the implementation stage, following significant pivots, or not at all. Where Activities lacked a strong, pervasive vision, the research team identified that they also lacked a corresponding understanding of the confluence of MSD and women and/or youth. Activity reports indicated that this gap in understanding leaves staff adrift and, ultimately, has an impact on the depth of inclusion. In a few cases, it was reported that commercially oriented staff did not understand why an MSD approach is used to improve incomes, access to opportunity, and agency of youth and women, nor did they necessarily view the approach as appropriate for the purpose of youth development. One Activity stated that the deeply entrenched perception of women's inclusion as being socially, not commercially, driven gave these staff the license to do the bare minimum.

Exhibit 3: The intersection of youth development, women's economic empowerment, and MSD



This situation is very different from that of an Activity that has clearly articulated and woven their vision through a variety of documents, such as a gender or youth assessment or analysis, a guiding strategy, or a discrete monitoring and evaluation framework. For example, in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, **ÉLAN RDC I.2's** Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy is referenced across program documents and states how the program will be able to reach women's advancement beyond increased income. It states that "an important aspect of facilitating systemic change is shifting discriminatory social norms to create a more enabling environment for women's economic empowerment. While this does not form part of the programme's mandate, its importance is clear; all impact level indicators require behavioral or social norm change [...]." DFID, ÉLAN RDC's donor, similarly places emphasis on social norms change as a key driver of women's economic empowerment (WEE).

In Indonesia, **Promoting Rural Incomes through Support for Markets in Agriculture (PRISMA)** found that before they could build the capacity of staff to understand and articulate the importance of women's inclusion to their work, they needed to demystify women's inclusion. Confusion about what women's inclusion looks like reemerged at each stage of the project life cycle. They kept asking themselves: *What does it mean to be doing WEE and why does it matter?*

The data revealed that gender mainstreaming Activities, such as **ÉLAN RDC** and **PRISMA**, were more likely to have developed a comprehensive rationale for including women, and even youth, in market systems at the outset. In contrast, youth- and women-targeted programs did not start off with a vision for using an MSD approach to call out, for example, that literacy, reproductive health, and livelihood skills gains require facilitation, and that these gains are critical to their theory of change.

One Activity articulated that they found there was a lack of instruments to target youth, in particular young women. They reported that had they performed a better initial gender analysis and female youth targeting, they felt they would have had a greater impact on young rural women.

Finding 2: Results chains are critical for MSD activity planning, but they often fail to mention youth's and/or women's constraints and opportunities.



Most of the reviewed MSD interventions were designed based on a value chain, causal logic, or results chain analysis, but few implementing partners articulated youth's or women's constraints and opportunities within these planning tools. While gender responsiveness was frequently cited as an approach to plan for inclusion, it was not clear from the results chains whether it was employed. In many instances, results chains included general statements about “women and men.” In the case of youth-specific Activities, intersectionality with gender and age-range bracket (younger vs. older youth) was rarely addressed in results chains; however, anecdotal examples based on CLA or MEL learning were available. One exception to this was **Feed the Future Inova's** results chain, which included a development impact section that looked at multiple indicators of importance to women's development, such as increased participation or potential for participation, contribution to improved food security, and opportunities for backward (or upstream) linkages³ and job creation.

ÉLAN RDC's results chain includes WEE outcomes, but only where there is also a purposeful WEE objective. They also noted, pragmatically, that the rapid Activity planning and partnership pilot phases hampered the effective integration of gender-responsive outcomes in results chains.⁴

Finding 3: Youth and gender assessments and analyses, when performed, provide valuable insights into women's and youth's opportunities and constraints.



The landscape analysis established that when performed, formative research yielded the most comprehensive identification of women's and youth's constraints and opportunities.

For gender mainstreaming or women-only Activities, the landscape analysis found that formative research such as gender analyses, strategies, gender-specific sector analyses, rapid gender assessments, and WEE assessments had been conducted. In these documents, constraints were more plentiful and specific than opportunities. Risks specific to women—gender-based violence, displacement from value chains, health and safety, and unpaid care/domestic work—were cited, but the extent to which interventions attempted to address these risks was unclear. In all cases, gender and youth formative analysis was rarely translated into inclusion elements in or annexed to results chains.

RisiAlbania is notable among the youth-targeted Activities, because they performed comprehensive formative research that married youth and sectoral analyses during the planning phases. Formal lessons learned from **Revitalizing Agriculture and Incomes in New Markets (RAIN)** stressed the

³ Backward linkages encompass subcontracting, supplier contracts, input service collaborations and hence can create employment and offer potential for enhancing domestic production capacity.

⁴ As described on page 16 in the DCED's 2017 Synthesis Document titled “How to Integrate Gender and Women's Economic Empowerment into Private Sector Development Programmes.”

importance of using the gathered analysis data: “Gender analysis findings should be more explicitly included in results chains [...]. There was a great deal of useful information that did not get incorporated.”

[Exhibit 4](#) and [Exhibit 5](#) present inventories of the specific youth’s and women’s constraints and opportunities in the market system referred to in the landscape analysis document review. The following constraints are common to both youth and women:

- Poor access to education, land, finance, and transport
- Poor access to mechanized equipment
- Poor access to entrepreneurship training, business development, and support services
- Poor skills that relegate them to production and processing roles
- Poor networks and market linkages
- Risk of gender-based violence and harassment (women and girls were the only groups specified)

Overall, gender mainstreaming Activities seemed to have performed deeper analysis during the planning stage. For youth Activities in particular, the range of formative research tools was more limited and tended to offer generic guidance on youth engagement, instead of context-specific youth considerations. Several Activities developed bespoke tools and guidance to ensure interventions are planned in an inclusive manner. A list of these tools and links are found in [Annex 2](#).

[Exhibit 4: Inventory of commonly identified women’s constraints and opportunities⁵](#)

WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES	WOMEN'S CONSTRAINTS
Workplace improvement: • Improved health and safety • Childcare provision • Labor rights enforced • Schedule and location flexibility • Upward mobility and recognition Finance: • Access to mobile money for decision making and control • Access to information on their own account • Increased men's participation in savings groups to improve household saving capacity As consumers: • Improved marketing to reach women • Access to goods that serve women At the first line of agriculture: • Higher awareness of farm needs due to women’s roles in farming, harvesting, and processing	Domestic role and social norms: • Diversion of resources from business to household • Limitations due to childcare • Educational and reproductive barriers • Gendered division of labor • Responsibility for time-intensive tasks • Exposure to gender-based violence/harassment Employment: • Bias/social barriers in certain occupations • Fewer chances for participation and decision making • Lower wages compared to men • Poorly recognized and rewarded labor • Little access to capacity building and other growth opportunities • Less powerful social networks Legal/Social norms: • Limited human rights protection

⁵ This table represents aggregate constraints and opportunities from all reviewed Activities. It is important to note that on the whole, there was little duplication besides generic points related to lack of transport, land, and access to jobs and finance. This indicates that with a few exceptions, the assessments performed at the outset were often broad and did not generate insights specific enough to inform alternative approaches.

WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES	WOMEN'S CONSTRAINTS
Impact on household well-being: As women's contributions to household food supply and finances increase, they tend to have more influence in household decision making	- Limited access to land/land ownership - Major decisions made by men Transport: - Restrictions due to cultural norms (e.g., husband's permission) - Reliance on intermediaries for access to the market (husbands, younger siblings, or children and adolescents) Control of financial resources (household/personal): - Limited access to formal and informal financial products and services - Inability to access or make business decisions regarding mechanized equipment

Exhibit 5: Inventory of commonly identified youth constraints and opportunities

YOUTH'S OPPORTUNITIES	YOUTH'S CONSTRAINTS
Sectors: - Information and communication technology services - Agriculture sub-sectors with high youth employment or enterprise potential, such as agro-processing - Agriculture sub-sectors where youth output can be higher than that of adults (e.g. rice, sunflower seeds) Education: - Managerial and technical positions that are scarce, but high in demand (e.g., food technologists or quality controllers) Needs: - Youth gain comfort with committed buyer for their products Assumption: Young entrepreneurs are attractive employees because they are more inclined to take risks in response to emerging market demand, and can access market information through new communication technologies	Education: - Poor employment outcome of technical training programs in agriculture and related fields (poor educational quality) Employment/Self-employment: - Poor job application outcomes due to competition with adults (especially adult women) - Occupational gender segregation (e.g., women in caretaking and processing roles) - Occupational age segregation (e.g., relegated to processing and production) - Limited access to land, finance, transport, mechanized equipment, training, and business development services (BDS) - Poor networks and market linkages Legal/Social norms: - Lack of information on employees' rights (increased likelihood of accepting unfavorable working arrangements and low wages) - Competing opportunities "Fast money" - Rural-urban migration Health: - Availability of sexual and reproductive health information, products and services, including gender-based violence and harassment

Finding 4: Initially, most Activities identified target sectors based on where youth and women were already found in high concentration. This changed with increased reflection and experience to involve non-traditional sectors and



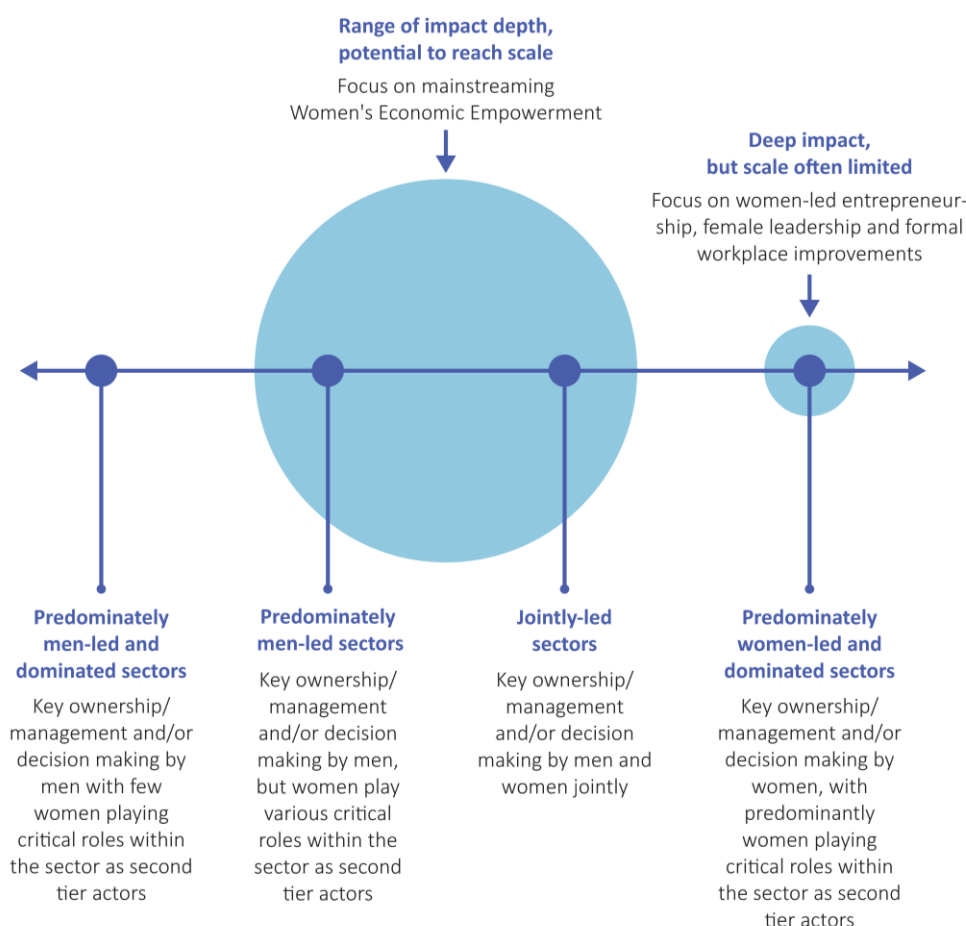
leadership roles, including within support sectors not typically included in MSD Activities.

While a few Activities started off looking for non-traditional roles for women, most identified opportunities that could benefit women and youth by starting with sectors and roles where women and youth were already present in large concentration. There are numerous examples of Activities that pivoted from this starting point. For example, during the implementation phase, one Activity realized that focusing on women in traditional subsectors only reinforced the status quo and “further embedded women into their current roles.” They later established that they should give greater attention to moving women into new functions within the value chain and roles with low female participation, particularly in non-traditional jobs (which can be in traditional sectors).

Feed the Future’s Youth Leadership for Agriculture Activity (YLA) identified an opportunity to incentivize an NGO to train young women as tractor operators in areas where there was a driver deficit. The contracting farms recognized the young women’s capacity as generally reliable and careful drivers who were attentive to maintenance. They were keen on retaining female drivers in the future. This represents a transformational shift in the perception of young women’s role and capacity in rural Uganda.

MDF recognized that the choice of sector—traditional vs. non-traditional—influenced the Activity’s capacity to actively promote women’s equality and/or reach scale. In [Exhibit 6](#) below, MDF demonstrated their learning with respect to the sectors that represent the most substantial depth of impact at scale; they are in men- and jointly-led sectors (non-traditional sectors).

Exhibit 6: The MDF WEE continuum



Source: MDF. 2018. "Beyond Income – A Critical Analysis of Agency Measurement in Economic Programming"

There are also Activities that identified supporting markets not directly linked to target goods/value chains to overcome gender and youth constraints to participation in economic activities. **RisiAlbania** established that young women did not have equal access to employment because of unpaid childcare responsibilities. They are developing a pilot intervention to promote sustainable and affordable models of childcare services to improve employment opportunities for women through a public–private partnership model.

Finding 5: Flexibility, iteration, and innovation are required to identify and develop opportunities within market systems; however, to include youth and women at the outset, some elements of traditional development planning are critical.

The approach to planning an inclusive MSD intervention can take a number of different forms. To bridge the gap between women, youth, and MSD planning approaches, some Activities blended planning tools, then relied on CLA to course correct when new information became available, particularly related to new market opportunities and the behavior and incentivization of market actors. When Activities blended these tools at the initial stage (see [Exhibit 7](#)), they were more likely to weave their inclusion strategy through the business case, MEL approach, CLA, learning agendas, and/or other planned means of reflection. Some Activities put more stock in learning gained through experience, noting that

exposure, trust, and time could bring forth important learning that an extensive, expensive, rapidly outdated gender and youth assessments could not.

MSD results chains, embedded within theories of change, depend on CLA for proving and refining, but gender and youth strategies are not necessarily as readily revised. They are based on gender and youth assessment and analysis, which may or may not include market actors' and other stakeholders' perceptions, or involve the risks, constraints, and opportunities that should be represented in the results chain.

PRISMA used information on men and women to make the business case to companies for the need for a gendered marketing strategy. For example, they suggested marketing strategies to partners informed by gender analysis to resolve challenges in marketing products stemming from gender-related constraints. They developed an evidence-based approach to gather data on women's roles and decision making, then strengthened the feedback loop from baseline and impact assessments to prove and improve the business case to partners to include women.

An innovative outlier, **YLA**, took a “design in reverse” strategy, where they worked with market actors to co-create interventions by identifying potential pain points in the engagement of youth. They then co-designed value-add propositions to allow partners to benefit from YLA support to maximize profit and achieve sustained growth. Reportedly, this approach eliminated the need to chase funding to comply with YLA indicators—a challenge that could result in excessive direct delivery (see [Case Study 2](#)). Instead, YLA aligned market actor business performance indicators to meet contractual deliverables.

Exhibit 7: Integration of planning resources



2. IMPLEMENTATION

This section reviews MSD strategies and tactics used to engage market actors to include youth and/or women, and the degree to which this facilitated change related to inclusion in MSD programming.

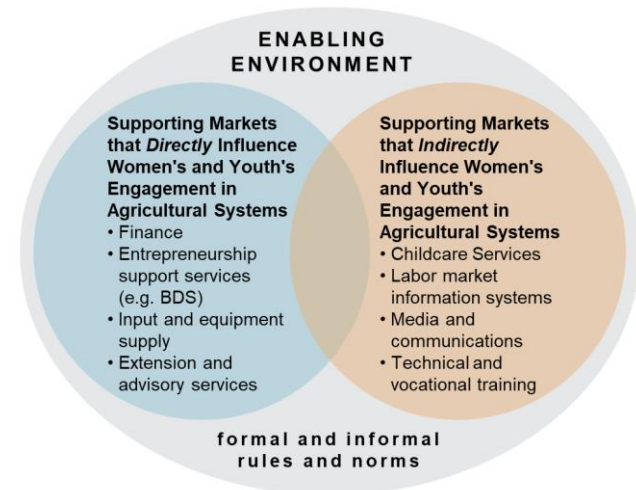
Finding 6: Activities used a vast array of MSD tactics to engage and benefit women and youth in agricultural market systems, including intervening in critical



supporting markets that either directly or indirectly influence agricultural markets.

The range of MSD tactics used to include women and youth in agricultural market systems and supporting markets make for a diverse landscape. While there were two standout MSD tactics commonly cited across Activities (discussed more in [Exhibit 9](#): and [Finding 8](#)), the remaining MSD tactics Activities used responded to context- and sector-specific dynamics. MSD tactics for women and youth arose most strongly in agriculture and eight supporting markets, including entrepreneurship support services, input and equipment supply, extension and advisory services, finance, childcare services, media and communications, labor market information services, and technical and vocational training.

Exhibit 8: Supporting markets with direct or indirect influences on women's and youth's engagement in agriculture



Activities recognized the necessity of working in a variety of supporting markets to improve women's and youth's participation and benefit in agriculture. This includes working in supporting markets that *directly* link to a range of agricultural commodities and sectors (e.g., finance, entrepreneurship support services, extension and advisory services, and input and equipment supply), as well as those that *indirectly* influence and affect women's and youth's engagement in agricultural systems (e.g., childcare services, labor market information systems, media and communications, and technical and vocational training) (see [Exhibit 8](#)). While not a supporting market per se, about half of the Activities also reported interventions designed to facilitate changes in the broader enabling environment given the significant impact it has on creating and enforcing formal and informal rules and norms that transect a variety of agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

In agricultural sectors, more than a quarter of implementing partners employed MSD approaches focused on facilitating inclusive outgrower and ingrower schemes, whereby women suppliers and producers were supported to expand their roles, production capabilities, and incomes. In addition, implementing partners reported efforts to expand access to input supply, with a focus on female agent models as a means to increase the number of women as sales agents, distributors, and agricultural advisors and extensionists, as well as to expand access to productive resources among women producers, including agricultural technology and information. There was also evidence of implementing partners using an agro-dealer or agent model as an entry point for youth in agriculture, but many of these models failed to take challenges for female youth into consideration.

Nearly all Activities intervened in supporting markets with *direct* links to agriculture as part of approaches to facilitate greater engagement of women and youth in agriculture. By far, the input supply sector was the most common entry point for introducing inclusive business models focused on women,

and to a lesser extent, youth.⁶ The AWE team also found inclusive entrepreneurship support services models, including BDS, across several Activities. Implementing partners often used higher intensity tactics to support these models, with limited evidence of scalability. The exception is the work the **Arab Women's Enterprise Fund (AWEF)** does in Jordan (see [Exhibit 9](#) below for more details). Interesting work is also done in the financial sector around opportunities for digital financial services to expand women's access to financial products and services and increase control over income. Market-led approaches to improving youth's access to finance, however, are still limited. In this review, finance is a sector where development actors tend to heavily incentivize or even replace market actors (i.e., financial service providers) in an attempt to trial innovations, promote more inclusive models, and reduce risk. As one Activity stated:

While these instruments [credit guarantees], used judiciously, can have catalytic effects, they need to be clearly justified by the partners' own vision and substantial investment or 'skin in the game,' and further backed by technical advice, linkages, mentoring and other facilitation from the project.

Far fewer Activities (less than a quarter) described engaging in supporting markets that *indirectly* influence women's and youth's engagement in agricultural sectors. For women, Activities tended to focus on influencing gender, social norms, and childcare services as critical supporting markets. Where Activities prioritized social norms, there were notable challenges around getting market actors to fully lead these interventions, which resulted in higher intensity involvement from the Activity. Two Activities mentioned focusing on the care economy and childcare services as a critical supporting market for women's market inclusion and participation in paid work. They reported limitations around high-investment costs for market actors, which made it difficult to be completely market-led. For youth-focused programs, several Activities identified labor market information systems, finance, and technical and vocational training as critical supporting markets to youth's participation in and benefit from agricultural market systems.

[Exhibit 9](#) presents a classification of commonly reported sector-specific tactics Activities employed to benefit women and/or youth, including details on how they designed and implemented interventions. These are not exhaustive, but provide much-needed context around how Activities use a variety of high-intensity and light-touch MSD tactics to engage and benefit women and youth in agriculture and supporting markets.

⁶ Of the 15 Activities included in the Landscape Analysis Report, only four had an explicit focus on youth, which influenced the finding around what MSD tactics are the most commonly used to benefit women and/or youth. Because the landscape of Activities is highly skewed toward programming that has an explicit focus on women or integrates gender as a cross-cutting component, it is more likely to have richer insights around MSD tactics used to benefit women than youth.

Exhibit 9: Classification of sector-specific tactics used and illustrative interventions

TACTIC	INTERVENTIONS
AGRICULTURE – PRODUCTION, EXTENSION, AND AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY SERVICES, INPUT AND EQUIPMENT SUPPLY	
Co-invest in inclusive business models and demonstrate the business case [Women/Youth]	• ÉLAN RDC partners with a coffee cooperative and an NGO in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and co-invests in an inclusive business pilot focused on developing a line of coffee produced by women that is sold to consumer-minded end markets. The cooperative is supported by the partner NGO to develop an internal control system to ensure full traceability of cherries, market women-only produced coffee through clear messaging on social impact to exporters and processors, and improve coffee quality through information and training to female producers. • ÉLAN RDC partners with a commercial maize farm in the DRC, and co-invests to pilot and scale an out-grower scheme on concession land that prioritizes the recruitment of women as contract farmers, including supporting the commercial farm to conduct small-scale comparison tests between males and females who have access to the same productive assets and information. • ÉLAN RDC captures business performance indicators before and after implementation of the pilot interventions to demonstrate that targeting women and improving the terms of their engagement in coffee production and contract maize farming can also increase private-sector revenue. • RisiAlbania identifies sectors with potential to absorb considerable numbers of youth while also generating higher skilled job opportunities. RisiAlbania selects exporters in the medicinal and aromatic plants and fresh fruits and vegetables markets who share the same vision and co-invest with them in inclusive business pilots for youth employment.
Work with and through women's groups, associations, and producer networks to facilitate expanded roles for women in agriculture [Women]	• Naatal Mbay identifies women's producer groups engaged in cereals in Senegal and integrates them into local consolidation networks (CNs) to gain access to productivity training, seed system strengthening, contract linkages, agricultural insurance and climate information services, ICT support, and mechanized post-harvest services. • Naatal Mbay and CNs co-develop gender quotas to increase the number of women in leadership roles, where they are underrepresented (e.g., database managers, field agents). • Naatal Mbay convenes participatory diagnostic sessions to reflect with CNs on the positions of women in the respective networks, identify challenges, and co-develop solutions to improve integration of women in decision-making bodies. • AWEF partners with leading dairy processors and retailers in Jordan, and builds their capacity to formalize linkages with networks of women producers and processors and strengthen quality assurance. AWEF-supported processors and retailers sign commercial agreements directly with women's associations, incorporating products under company brands and indicating they are sourced from women, which results in a significant increase in sales.
Expand gender- and youth-sensitive input distribution networks, including promoting women and youth as agro-dealers and agents [Women/Youth]	• Feed the Future Inova conducts research in Mozambique to make a business case for women's inclusion in the input supply sector. The research finds that (1) female farmers represent an untapped market opportunity for input distributors; (2) female agro-retailers, agents, and extension workers can help input distributors reach male and female farmers more effectively; and (3) a better understanding of women's consumer preferences can help input distributors deliver products and services tailored to their needs.

TACTIC	INTERVENTIONS
	• Feed the Future Inova uses this research to support gender-sensitive marketing practices among input suppliers, including integrating incentive structures for reaching more female farmers as customers and using gender-disaggregated data tracked through Customer Relation Management systems to monitor effectiveness of marketing strategies. • Feed the Future Inova uses research to support gender-sensitive distribution practices among input suppliers, including encouraging models that reach women directly on their farms (e.g., mobile inputs shops and village agent networks) and promoting female-friendly packaging of inputs (e.g., mini-packs of input and visual application instructions). • Feed the Future Inova supports input suppliers to engage more women as agro-dealers and agents by developing career progression programs that help female agents advance to agro-dealer and retailer status, and adopting gender-sensitive recruitment and human resource practices to hire and retain more female talent. • PropCom Mai-Karfi advises local input distributors in Nigeria on packaging and marketing to female consumers who grow horticultural products, including developing micro-packs of fertilizer that are more affordable for women who own smaller farms and want to experiment before committing to a larger purchase. • Yapasa pilots a last-mile distribution of inputs model by working with local input suppliers to set up shops in rural areas, run by youth farmers or entrepreneurs as community agro-dealers. Yapasa scales the model based on documented success from the pilot—the model is profitable, expands last-mile distribution, and is attractive to youth because it provides year-round income and diversifies the farm enterprises. • YLA and Driving Youth-led New Agribusiness and Microenterprise in Northern Uganda (DYNAMIC) work with partners to expand access to seeds and other inputs for youth by providing them on credit during the planting season and allowing youth to pay back the credit through produce after harvesting. The level of default is high due to inexperience, loss, drought, pests, and other shocks; however, youth who are successful see their business grow substantially.
Expand access to skills, information, and market linkages for youth [Youth]	• YLA uses grants and subcontracts to engage dynamic private-sector firms, associations, NGOs, community-based organizations, and youth-led organizations in Uganda. These actors establish local agent models, whereby local agents provide fee-based linkages (information, advice, and support services) between youth farmers and other market actors. This includes issuing grants to partners (with leverage requirements) to develop training and job placement programs through a fee-based and cost-sharing mechanism with youth trainees and potential employers. It also includes the development of community-based facilitators who can train youth out-grower farmers to produce and sell maize, bean, and sesame seeds. • DYNAMIC facilitates the training of peer educators (PEs) in business and life skills, and financial literacy in collaboration with local market actors. PEs, in turn, supply training services to groups of youth at a fee (paid by youth themselves, employers, or financial institutions). Some PEs become sales agents, based on their knowledge and contacts with local products and services.
Create joint-partnership initiatives to provide comprehensive services to	• Punjab Enabling Environment Project (PEEP) analyzes incentives of local actors in the livestock service market in Pakistan and address their pain points in providing inclusive services to women. PEEP convenes partners from the public and private sectors, associations, and academia to exchange information and forge common action plans, including brokering a partnership between the Livestock and Dairy Development Department, University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences,

TACTIC	INTERVENTIONS
women livestock farmers [Women]	Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry Bahawalpur, National Rural Support Program Microfinance Bank, Telenor Pakistan, and livestock breeder associations. These partnerships are built on shared value and common incentives for empowering women in the dairy sector, and deliver comprehensive services at a local level to female livestock farmers, including access to credit, veterinary services, animal husbandry and feed services, and market information.
FINANCE – DIGITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES, FINANCIAL LITERACY AND CREDIT GUARANTEES	
Strengthen supply and demand of fintech services and products in Jordan and Egypt [Women]	• AWEF partners with a digital financial services (DFS) company (an e-wallet provider) to improve the number of female customers (many of whom in Jordan are unbanked). AWEF co-invests in a 12-month pilot to establish a female agent network, where the private-sector partner invests in training and continuous support to female agents and AWEF provides technical assistance and shares the cost of a marketing campaign to expand e-wallets outreach among women in underserved areas in Jordan. In the first year of the partnership, the DFS company registered more than 12,000 female e-wallet users (9,000 more than the target). • AWEF conducts a financial sector mapping in Egypt to identify the constraints to women's access to, and use of, financial services. AWEF shares insights from mapping with DFS providers in Egypt, including that around 23.2 million adult women in Egypt are unbanked or underbanked, and that DFS providers (either via a mobile wallet or an e-payment agent) can provide an entry point to financial services for underserved segments, particularly poor women. The study was an eye-opener for a number of DFS providers, and AWEF collaborates with large e-payment network providers and mobile wallets providers to introduce gender-smart outreach strategies.
Create sustainable entities to ensure access to finance for women in Zambia [Women and youth]	• Using experience with broad-based financial market development programs in other countries, DFID designed Financial Sector Deepening (FSD) Zambia project to transition to a legal entity (referred to as a special purpose vehicle) to continue improvements in financial inclusion for women and youth. • FSD Zambia establishes a Women and Financial Inclusion sub-project to (1) educate financial service providers on value of reaching women and youth as customers; (2) design consumer-centric, cost-effective, and safe products for women and youth; (3) expand provision of financial education and literacy; and (4) develop assessments and learning tools for partners to use to drive inclusive business models.
Incentivize financial institutions to develop women-friendly financial services [Women]	• MDF encourages private-sector partners (i.e., financial service providers) to identify women-specific challenges and co-invests in bottom-up approaches to improve the number of female-friendly financial products and services, expand access to financial literacy, and introduce mobile banking models. • ÉLAN RDC demonstrates the commercial case for targeting women, an underserved consumer segment in financial services to a large financial service provider in the DRC. ÉLAN RDC and the financial service provider co-create a pilot to test the attractiveness of rural agency banking among male and female consumers, and adapt the business model to further increase uptake among women. Adaptations included increasing the number of female agents based on evidence that women prefer to buy and sell from other women and ensuring that marketing messaging explicitly targets women.

TACTIC	INTERVENTIONS
Create credit guarantee scheme to support youth's access to finance in Zambia [Youth]	Yapasa tests a variety of financial intervention mechanisms to expand access to finance for youth-owned enterprises engaged in production and marketing of fish. This includes service contracts, direct grants, and input credit guarantees. Yapasa pilots credit guarantee schemes (up to 50 percent) to encourage financial institutions to experiment with new products and new markets in rural areas focused on youth-owned enterprises. This intervention links to a challenge fund where Yapasa co-invests in youth entrepreneurs to de-risk entry costs and attract more young people to the sector.
ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT SERVICES – BDS, ACCESS TO INFORMATION, AND LICENSING	
Opportunistically target partners who can help expand women- and youth-focused BDS provision [Women/Youth]	- RisiAlbania selects partners and co-invests in pilot activities to expand BDS provision to male and female youth involved in agribusiness, including integrating pay for results milestones in partnership agreements. RisiAlbania gathers information from the pilots to develop a business case for youth. - PRISMA identifies BDS providers that already work with female farmers/entrepreneurs or are interested in targeting these segments to introduce productivity-enhancing agricultural products and help grow female agent networks in Indonesia. - Bangladesh Rice and Diversified Crops (RDC) Activity partners with the private sector to launch a business scale-up program (accelerator) to help female entrepreneurs in the rice and diversified crops sectors gain access to skills and supports necessary to grow.
Develop multi-sector service networks for women entrepreneurs in Jordan [Women]	- AWEF partners with local municipalities in Jordan to establish WEE units, where women engaged in livestock and dairy sectors can obtain general information on how to set up a business, access licenses and permits for their businesses, and obtain links to other skills development, marketing, and finance. - AWEF builds capacity of a few local municipalities to respond to new home licensing instructions the Jordanian government issued, including helping them develop guidelines for simple and affordable ways to issue home-based vocational licenses. The Jordanian Ministry of Local Administration approves and adopts these guidelines and in partnership with AWEF, disseminates to 45 additional municipalities in Jordan. WEE units raise awareness among women-owned, home-based businesses on the licensing process to generate demand. - AWEF partners with the Jordan Food and Drug Administration to deliver training on improved production practices, food, health, and safety guidelines, and ways to fulfill municipality requirements for the licensing process. AWEF also partners with the Jordan Income and Sales Tax Department to co-develop a national communications strategy to raise awareness on tax laws and provide guidance for home-based businesses. - To date, this collaborative approach has catalyzed home-based vocational licensing in livestock and dairy sectors across 20 municipalities within Jordan and more than 300 women have obtained vocational licenses. AWEF continues to facilitate linkages with women who were licensed with large, national buyers.
LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SERVICES	
Engage new actors to facilitate upgrades in labor	RisiAlbania generates awareness among media actors on the profitability of reporting on labor market issues, including attracting the interest of the private sector to sponsor these programs. RisiAlbania issues an open call for proposals and establishes three media partnerships, where RisiAlbania provides cost share and capacity-building support. These

TACTIC	INTERVENTIONS
market information services in Albania [Youth]	partnerships develop TV and radio programs, where they report on in-demand skills and professions targeted at youth and their parents. This intervention had a significant impact on more than 78,000 young people and their parents with regards to improved understanding and awareness of vocational training, promoting self-employment, and changing perceptions around desirability of careers and skills in-demand from employers. It also affected training service providers and employers—using surveys and interviews, the Activity found that 32 percent of young people who watched, listened, or read the media programs had altered their behavior by either changing decisions around education and training, changing the way they looked for a job, or establishing their own businesses.
Support the development of a job-matching and information service market in Albania [Youth]	• RisiAlbania supports the upgrade of an already existing model in the market to make it more commercially viable, including assisting with the development of business plans, co-financing to mitigate risks in introduction of new services, and introduction of monitoring and knowledge management system.
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT – RULES, NORMS, AND CONSTRAINTS-TARGETED INTERVENTIONS	
Identify and embed constraints-targeted interventions in partnership agreements [Women]	• PRISMA identifies recurring constraints that hamper women’s ability to participate in and benefit from livestock, horticulture, aquaculture, and other agricultural markets in Indonesia through formative research and monitoring, determines which potential market actors can be engaged to address these cross-cutting constraints, and assesses potential impact and outreach. • PRISMA integrates constraints-targeted interventions in partnership design, including optimizing access to labor-saving tools to reduce women’s workloads and working with the private sector to ensure transfer of wages to bank accounts controlled by women to improve their control over income.
Promote visibility of GESI innovations among market actors [Women]	• MDF convenes the private sector in Women@Work sessions in Pakistan, sharing business models for hiring women in the livestock and horticulture sector, and hosting panel discussions with MDF partners, other businesses, and government and civil society to exchange knowledge. • MDF works with the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce to devise strategies for encouraging female inclusion in the livestock and agricultural labor market, and identify access points for interested firms to learn about GESI opportunities and connect with relevant market actors that can support the adoption of the GESI business model.
Promote opportunities for firm- and network-level social norms change [Women]	• RAIN engages Mango Tree, a Ugandan curriculum design expert, to co-design gender curriculum with a large contract farming company, input and output dealers, and other private-sector actors in the Acholi sub-region of Uganda to support norms change at the company level and within the company’s network of agents and farmers. Having the private sector involved in the co-design process ensured they felt confident in their ability to roll out the training. A key component of the design process involves development of the business case around why gender dynamics matter to a private company. • MDF identifies corporate-level behavior change that transcends a single intervention/sector and embeds them in partnership design, including integrating WEE considerations in a company’s national and sales marketing plans, co-

TACTIC	INTERVENTIONS
Identify challenges to paid work and support business models that promote workplace enabling factors [Young Women/ Women]	developing human resources policies related to female distribution networks, and incorporating WEE-related business metrics into companies' management information systems. • RisiAlbania identifies that young women do not have equal access to employment across tourism, agribusiness, and ICT sectors because of unpaid care work responsibilities, so they help incentivize public–private collaboration models between local government and businesses by co-investing in sustainable and affordable models of childcare services offered by a greater diversity of market actors (local government, private sector, NGOs). • MDF uses a WEE framework to identify “triggers” that limit women’s access and agency in tourism, ready-made garments, horticulture, livestock, and leather sectors; childcare services surfaces as a limiting factor to female participation in paid work. MDF integrates childcare solutions and other workplace enabling factors in partnership design, including supporting businesses in Fiji, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka to set up daycare facilities on site and segregated workspaces as culturally appropriate, and works with local advocacy organizations to drive gender-responsive changes in labor laws.

Finding 7: When engaging market actors to drive systems change for women and youth, Activities build on MSD partnership tactics.

Across Activities, there was significant mention of engaging market actors to achieve desired outcomes related to women and youth, and rich learning around tools and tactics. Reported tactics for engaging market actors were generally organized around partner selection, incentivizing partner involvement, and facilitating multi-actor partnerships.

PARTNER SELECTION. In reporting, nearly half of Activities describe partner selection processes that incorporate and evaluate discrete inclusion criteria. These selection processes are usually informed by an analysis of market opportunities that align with impacts for women and youth. Potential partners are assessed on their willingness and/or ability to promote inclusion of women and youth within and across sectors, and concepts put forth for co-investment are evaluated based on the ability of the proposed innovation or model to achieve inclusion results. Activities that integrate women and youth in their selection criteria are the most likely to do it at the design or early implementation stages, and often see it as an integral piece of achieving their vision for improved participation and benefit of women and youth. For example, **AWEF** focuses on working with partners that recognize both the commercial and wider social benefits of making changes in their business model. Similarly, **DYNAMIC** selects partners according to their willingness to see the benefit of inclusive business models that situate youth as key drivers of change, or change agents, in a variety of market-based and non-market-based activities.

While not all Activities have selection criteria related to gender and youth, most recognize the need to make the business case or build capacity to promote more inclusive business practices among market actors they partner with.

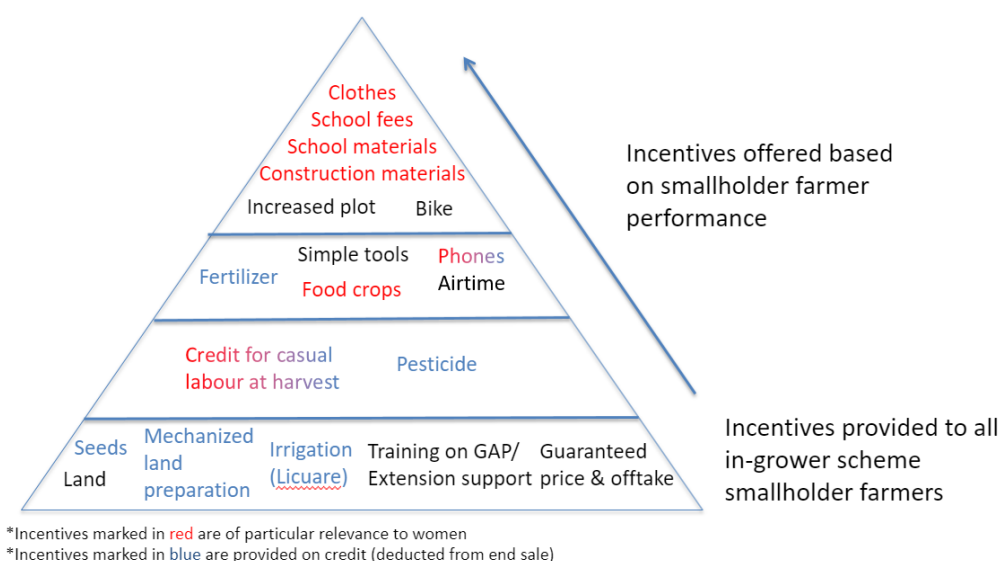
INCENTIVIZING PARTNER INVOLVEMENT. In MSD programs, partners are usually incentivized to participate in shared objectives through offers of financial support, technical assistance, and potential benefits realized as a result of broader systems change. While these same tactics are employed for engaging partners to work with women and youth in market-based activities, about half of Activities explicitly mention or allude to the importance of understanding stakeholders' interests and incentives to appeal to them. **RisiAlbania** noted that:

Explicitly identifying stakeholders' interests and incentives vis-à-vis gender and social equity is hugely relevant, yet too often ignored. Indeed, it is essential that they are understood in order to find the 'gender leverage' and build a convincing business case for women. – RisiAlbania

More on RisiAlbania's private-sector partner engagement tactics and business case for inclusion can be found in [Case Study 3](#).

Moreover, **Feed the Future Inova** conducted a gender assessment to better understand how to encourage women's participation in performance clubs and out-grower and in-grower schemes. Findings from this assessment suggested that Inova introduce additional incentives that appeal to women, including non-financial performance-based incentives (e.g., clothes, school fees, school materials, construction materials, bicycles, and credit) and casual labor on credit to reduce limitations around female farmers' ability to pay for contract labor during harvest. [Exhibit 10](#) presents a full list of non-monetary performance-based incentives, with incentives marked in red as particularly relevant to women and those with blended coloring (red/blue) both relevant to women and provided on credit.

Exhibit 10: Non-monetary performance-based incentives offered by Inova



Source: Rapid Gender Assessment to Support Supply Chain Management Market System Activities in Nampula and Zambezia Provinces, PowerPoint presentation produced by Julia Lipowiecka, WEE Specialist, Inova (MarketShare Associates)

FACILITATING MULTI-ACTOR PARTNERSHIPS. A few Activities explored opportunities for multi-actor partnerships to drive systems change benefiting women and/or youth beyond one actor or sector function. For example, in the **PEEP** Women Empowerment in South Punjab through Investment in Rural Economy (WEinSPIRE) initiative, the Activity identified public and private-sector actors that entered into a joint partnership agreement to provide a comprehensive set of services to women livestock farmers, including access to finance and veterinary services, and information on animal husbandry, livestock rearing, and feed services. This approach resulted in more than 2,000 women trained on animal husbandry best practices, 6,000 women who accessed veterinary services, and 35,000 who received microloans.⁷

The project stepped back to analyze the incentives of the market system actors that touched the livestock sector—many of them already project partners—and addressed their pain points in providing more inclusive services. USAID PEEP’s role was to convene and align the incentives of all its partner market systems actors for achieving women’s economic empowerment. Most critically, these actors entered a formal joint-partnership with one another, not just the project. These partners, now engaged with one another through an initiative dubbed WEinSPIRE, provided well-rounded services to women livestock farmers in southern Punjab. – PEEP

YLA also used a facilitative, multi-partnership approach to meet workforce demand and support increased youth incomes along multiple value chains by working with private-sector actors, producer organizations, and workforce institutions, and linking the groups to create productive partnerships. For

⁷ These are results under the first phase of WEinSPIRE implemented in the Bahawalpur region of South Punjab. PEEP received a 2-year cost extension and has been expanding WEinSPIRE to the D G Khan area of South Punjab.

example, when a YLA partner scaled up to 24,000 out-growers and more than 40 youth cooperatives, the Activity developed a \$64,000 value-add proposition (with the partner leveraging \$1.3 million) to expand the partnership to include a digital payment provider, which gives the opportunity to trace youth farmer production and process mobile and cash payments through single-entry transactions that reduce risks and costs. YLA credits the success to finding the “right partner” and being able to pivot from funding the actor for one objective to quickly adding value where a business link was broken.

Finding 8: The business case was a common tool used to justify the inclusion of women and youth; however, few Activities reported on the scale at which business case tactics were used across sectors and/or on the efficacy of this tactic to achieve widespread and systemic changes in markets for women’s and youth’s inclusion.

Nine of the Activities in the landscape analysis reported using a business case to explain the financial and social benefits of greater inclusion of women and youth to market actors. Making the business case often involved some type of financial or in-kind support to an organization or enterprise to help mitigate the risks associated with taking on new market functions with groups they had not traditionally served or engaged. Business cases tended to focus on more women- and youth-friendly supply chain services, training, and engaging women and youth as suppliers, consumers, distributors, sales agents, and employees. In some cases, the business case centered on improved job quality. In all nine Activities, the implementer made the business case to individual or multiple market actors. Interestingly, four Activities noted the need for ongoing data collection to prove and improve upon the business case for WEE over time. This means more robust data collection and monitoring systems owned by market actors to justify the benefits of market inclusion of women and youth for their bottom line.

Bangladesh RDC Activity developed a set of business cases to address private sector perceptions about inclusion of women as viable market actors, including: women are not decision makers; women produce less and cannot be contracted as product suppliers; women have limited knowledge about production practices, and so on. To counter these perceptions and operationalize business case insights into partner co-creation processes, RDC developed a partner motivation assessment tool to evaluate the commercial incentive, feasibility, scale, and sustainability of integrating women within proposals. This tool has been instrumental in helping RDC staff better align company incentives with impact for women. For example, in the mung bean sector, RDC partners focused on export markets have significant quality and quantity constraints. Furthermore, women are predominantly involved in household farming of mung bean, but largely low-skilled and relegated to secondary or “helper” roles. RDC identified an alignment of incentives, where the companies can enhance their brand value and benefit from high-quality products by improving access to technology and negotiating sales contracts with female farmers. Both parties in this scenario realize improved quality and quantity of mung bean and see corollary increases in profitability.

Using information gleaned through this tool, RDC shortlists partners and enters into a co-creation phase, where they work with partners to co-develop and refine concepts. As part of co-creation, RDC also worked with firms to set and report on appropriate sex-disaggregated targets to begin to build evidence around how involving and empowering women as service providers, retailers, and other remunerative leadership actors can create “a reinforcing cycle of economic benefits to a company, the women it employs, and the communities in which they exist.” The tool was streamlined over time to reduce the amount of time required for proposal reviews. By integrating women in most business models under each Market Actor Agreement, RDC has been able to go beyond the target of 15 percent

female participation to 20 percent. In the selection process, RDC uses questions such as those found in Exhibit 11 below.

Exhibit 11: Selected questions from the Bangladesh RDC Partner Motivation Assessment Tool

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- Do women represent a new market segment for the firm?
 - Would working with women lead to greater profitability for the partner?
 - Could the partner realize increased efficiency by working with women?
 - Will the partner have access to higher volumes of raw materials?
 - Can the partner expect improved quality from engaging with women suppliers?
 - Does working with women represent a “doubling of options” for the partner?
 - Does the model affect the condition of women’s engagement at the cost of increased business?
 - Does the partner consider the socioeconomic status of women in the value chain or sector as a prior requirement to developing strategy?
 - What potential impact might the model have on the economic empowerment indicators? And what is the partner’s incentive, if any, to have on WEE domains?
-

Source: USAID Feed the Future Bangladesh Rice and Diversified Crops’ Partner Motivation Assessment Tool

However, while Activities cited making the business case in programming, they rarely reported on the scale at which it was used across sectors and on its outcomes to drive widespread and systemic change in markets for women and youth. In reporting, Activities described examples of making the business case with individual partners in discrete sectors, often as a part of co-creation processes, pilot projects, or through data collected in mid- or end-line assessments of the intervention. There was very little detail around how applicable business case insights were across a range of actors or sectors and to what extent these tactics were adapted or scaled over time. This makes it difficult to assess which Activities employed business case tactics as a core and to diffuse effort to drive inclusion outcomes for women and youth across their programming, or which applied the tactics more ad hoc and relegated to discrete actors and sectors within their programming.

Although there were some cases of reported success in using the business case with discrete private-sector partners,⁸ far more Activities did not fully document results or reported lackluster results. For example, **RisiAlbania** aimed to support youth to serve rural areas as business development service providers by making the business case to agribusinesses. However, they were not successful in making the business case, because agribusinesses did not trust young people were capable of advising them, and young people were new players in the market and did not have enough incentives or networks to make a business out of their advisory services.⁹ These challenges caused the project to shift tactics, and focus on established urban BDS providers and linking them to rural agribusinesses (see [Case Study 3](#)).

AWEF noted the importance of building a strong business case to “effectively ‘sell’ the benefits of new innovations and encourage private sector partners to test and change their business practices so that they are more inclusive of women.” They went on to demonstrate there was no one right way to make the business case for women’s economic empowerment, noting that it needed to be tailored to the country context, constraints women face, the sector, and specific interests of private-sector partners. AWEF was able to operationalize these guiding principles in their own programming. At the environment level, they used dissemination events to share business case challenges, opportunities, and innovative models

⁸ As an example, see ÉLAN RDC’s WEE Learning Series in Annex 2.

⁹ As documented in the *Promoting Business Development Services for Rural Entrepreneurs Concept Note* developed by Gramos Osmani, Agribusiness intervention Manager, on October 30, 2018. Page 2.

to demonstrate the commercial and wider social returns of adopting new business practices. This helped to scale interventions in several sectors, including the citrus sectors in Egypt and the digital financial services sectors in Egypt and Jordan. AWEF found that the business case needs to be concise and relevant, so that it resonates with the commercial and social interests of market actors.¹⁰

Finding 9: The use of high-intensity approaches is more common in Activities where there is no clear mandate or business case for a local actor to address constraints specific to women and youth.



There are many philosophies around the intensity of market facilitation approaches when it comes to fostering broader inclusion of women and youth. Some Activities take a more “purist” approach, indicating that they do not intervene directly with women and youth, but stimulate existing market players to take on more proactive roles in the market system to benefit women and youth. Others note that a mix of low- and high-intensity market facilitation approaches is necessary to address imbalances in women’s and youth’s inclusion in market systems, and incentivize markets to address women’s and youth’s constraints and facilitate more inclusive opportunities. High-intensity approaches¹¹ are the most often used with:

- Soft skills and empowerment activities (most notably with youth)
- Literacy, employment, and entrepreneurship skills to fill critical gaps in youth-targeted programs
- Social norms change activities (delivered by a local partner)

When employed, high-intensity approaches are used to fill gaps where market actors are perceived to be nonexistent or lacking a clear mandate. Furthermore, many report a progression of tactics, where Activities start out with high-intensity approaches and progress to “lighter touch,” more facilitative tactics over time. In some cases, high-intensity tactics are used as a pivot triggered by an understanding that sustainability or gender transformation would be unlikely using the current model. As an example, **PRISMA** supported businesses more intensely in the initial stages to mitigate risks and present evidence for adoption and scaling, and moved to more light-touch approaches as the partnership progressed. **PropCom** in Nigeria acknowledged that cost, time, and overcoming of social and cultural barriers were fundamental hurdles to an Activity’s capacity to reach women through gender mainstreamed MSD interventions. They were challenged to make the business case to partners to overcome these barriers using facilitative means.

3. ADAPTATION: WHO AND WHAT DRIVES INCLUSION?

This section deals with evidence of iteration prompted by adaptive management approaches, such as USAID’s CLA. Findings show that adaptive management can not only positively drive changes in program design and implementation, but also shift who drives the change.

¹⁰ As an example, see AWEF Practitioner Learning Briefs in [Annex 2](#).

¹¹ This is a best estimate due to the lack of available information that documents the extent to which the partner wholly or partially subsidized or directly implemented the activities. It is possible that some were highly subsidized rather than delivered directly; however, the result is the same in that there is no win–win case for these Activities.

Finding 10: If Activities could not reach women's inclusion targets under mainstreaming approaches, a response tactic was used to develop women-specific initiatives.



While most Activities (80 percent) started off with the intention of including women at the outset (whether or not there was a robust strategy to do so), there were often challenges around meeting women's inclusion targets, as evidenced in a few Activities' reporting. Where challenges to achieve female targets were persistent, a few Activities developed women-targeted initiatives to help bolster women's participation. As an example of this, **PEEP** progressed in its gender initiatives during implementation by introducing a matching grants program in Year 2 of the Activity to “support entrepreneurs/businesses who otherwise shy away from such opportunities due to perceived high risk or challenges pertaining to non-enabling policy or regulatory regimes... special emphasis is laid on encouraging women entrepreneurs to be benefited from the program,” and moving to a women-specific initiative called WEinSPIRE in Year 3 of the Activity. The WEinSPIRE initiative “align[ed] incentives for inclusion,” whereby local actors¹² took the lead on valuable service delivery that benefitted women and enabled PEEP to expand their women's empowerment work to another women-specific initiative —Women Investment in Networks of Dairy Sector (WINDS). In Year 4, PEEP developed the WINDS initiative, which improved distribution networks for dairy (milk collection, handling, and transport) and provided valuable training to women business owners, including entrepreneurship, micro-business planning, and productivity enhancement training.¹³ Three Activities mentioned piloting youth initiatives in non-youth-focused MSD programs to bolster youth participation, but many of these are or were in a pilot phase and lack results and details on whether they were or will be scaled over time.



Finding 11: Adaptive management pivots due to reflection and deliberate learning processes have an outsized impact on youth's and women's inclusion in many cases.

Evidence of adaptive management is found across most Activities and can be the catalyst for either the launch or expansion of youth's and women's inclusion. While [Section I. Planning for Inclusion](#) speaks to the need for planning to include traditional gender and/or youth planning activities, there is evidence that Activities use CLA to make both large and small critical improvements all along the project cycle, regardless of the extent of planning. These improvements take the shape of major pivots or minor tweaks. Activities use CLA to investigate the grey area between the youth, women, and MSD silos, and iterate to uncover opportunities and means to engage market actors. Examples of major pivots, as well as slight but significant improvements to tools, staff capacity and structure, and MEL to the benefit of youth and women are described below.



¹² Local actors in this multi-actor partnership model consisted of the Livestock and Dairy Development Department, which provided veterinary services and delivered training through mobile school buses, the University of Veterinary and Animal Services, which prepared training content and modules, the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Bahawalpur, which trained and prepared women livestock farmers on becoming credit-worthy, the National Rural Support Program Microfinance Bank, which provided access to finance, Telenor Pakistan, which supplied mobile access to information, and livestock breeder associations that provided access to markets for the purchase and sale of livestock.

¹³ All information related to the progression of PEEP's gender and women's empowerment initiatives during the project life cycle came from annual reports, specifically those spanning the April 2015–March 2016, April 2016–March 2017, April 2017–March 2018, and April 2018–March 2019 timelines.

PRISMA started from a “do no harm” approach in 2013 and, over a 4-year period, evolved to a gender mainstreaming approach. The Activity urges others to “get it right from the start,” stating that organizational behavior change can be extremely challenging, time consuming, and resource intensive. They added that the “*program should aim to have less gender analysis tools by the end of the program since staff should have internalized WEE practices and demonstrated more independent WEE thinking by that stage*” (See [Case Study 4](#)).¹⁴

RAIN’s women’s inclusion journey is a turnaround story that acknowledges important course corrections along the way. RAIN was an MSD Activity that pivoted to a gender mainstreaming focus mid-project. In 2013, the Activity chose to address the low representation of women on staff, which was corrected through targeted hiring. The new female recruits mentioned they did not feel like they had a voice. Male champions were enlisted to support women’s integration. Then, a mid-term evaluation revealed that while farmer income targets were surpassed, women and girls were not necessarily better off, and unintended consequences were “*an escalation of intra-family conflict, which culminated in domestic violence, divorce and a drop in productivity.*”¹⁵ The Activity was immediately responsive and developed a gender strategy, raising funds to support their mainstreaming efforts. This continuous process of learning, reflection, and adaptation resulted in an intentional gender approach that would not have been possible without a critical mass of empowered women on staff and a receptivity to change.

YLA found that mindset change and fear of failure were the biggest obstacles in implementing a CLA approach, and the skills required by staff did not come naturally. One of their key lessons was to iterate and improve gender analysis tools so they work for the project.

Other Activities made smaller pivots, which included changing the means of measuring poverty from the household to the individual level so that gender dynamics could be more closely observed or engagement strategies altered to improve the achievement of beneficiary targets. **Yapasa’s** early sectoral analysis did not reveal the difference between what young people said they wanted to do and the opportunities available to them. Yapasa discovered mid-project that while solid opportunities existed in single-harvest main-crop commodities, like soya, these were ultimately less attractive to young farmers than crops with short production cycles and regular year-round sales. Yapasa shifted their approach to concentrate on opportunities in high-value horticulture (such as input supply and aggregation services) that promoted more diversified farm enterprises and generated year-round income for youth.

Finding 12: The organizational structures used to assign the staff responsibility for inclusion, primarily of women, often evolved over time to reflect the need for increased effort at levels closer to market actors.



There are many models for gender and youth expertise to be either dispersed, siloed, or strategically guided or advised by specialists. The chosen model was found to be reflective of the strength of the vision for integration, the ability to execute the vision at the market actor level, and overall buy-in on behalf of the organization and partners.



¹⁴ As detailed in the timeline graphic from AIP-Rural’s Confronting Organisational Challenges to Mainstreaming Women’s Economic Empowerment in Market Systems Development Programs authored by Linda Jones. Page 4.

¹⁵ According to RAIN’s report on Gender Responsive Agri-Business Models in Northern Uganda (2018).

Technical gender specialists have various levels of effort dedicated to gender (15 percent or more) and are generally responsible for the review of all intervention concepts and plans; review of all tools (questionnaires, focus group discussion guides, etc.); participation in all review processes; and ensuring that gender-related recommendations are taken forward. Roughly a third of Activities were launched under the understanding that a technical gender specialist or external consultant(s) would be responsible for making sure a gender lens was applied. When these efforts were unsuccessful, programs often pivoted to assign the responsibility for inclusion to a program or implementation team member(s) to increase the likelihood that recommendations were followed, and accountability was assigned in a more impactful manner. In some cases, these team members became gender focal points and responsibility for gender was further devolved to increasingly frontline staff. Activities mentioned that fostering this type of culture change started from senior management and leadership, without which gender-related efforts would struggle, regardless of what specific management structures existed to address GESI.

ÉLAN RDC mainstreams women by making it “everyone’s business.” Ultimate responsibility for gender equality is with team leaders with support from the program manager and a full-time GESI lead. Team leaders recruit gender champions who are competitively chosen and incentivized. Their learning in transitioning to this structure suggests that the one focal point model is unsuccessful due to the difficulty and enormity of the task, particularly with geographical diversity and larger Activity sizes. There is a need for technical expertise to undertake analysis, and design activities and robust gender-sensitive MEL. They have noted challenges such as champions being well-meaning but under-skilled; underestimated time and resources required to perform tasks; and ultimately, leadership failing to make effective use of the information generated to improve outcomes for women, girls, and vulnerable groups. On the positive side, there is a demystifying of the practice, development of local expertise, and the engagement of men in an area traditionally dominated by women.

PRISMA originally had one full-time GESI specialist, who received short-term technical assistance from an external gender advisor with a strong background in WEE in MSD. The learning document states that “... due to a low-resourced set-up, the program guidance documents and strategic recommendations to improve WEE mainstreaming failed to gain traction. Over time, the lack of movement in mainstreaming WEE led to the increased marginalization of the GESI specialist.”¹⁶ To address this challenge, PRISMA recruited an additional specialist to provide more tactical support to staff, including coaching and introducing tools that emphasized ownership of data collection, increasing the relevance and meaning of WEE in terms of the program’s work with business partners, and developing a WEE vocabulary. Over time, WEE gained more visibility, acceptance, and prioritization within the organization and began to yield results. The program leadership recognized the need to allocate it even more resources, including a head of portfolio, three business consultants, and one part-time results measurement specialist.

¹⁶ As well-described in AIP-Rural's Confronting Organisational Challenges to Mainstreaming Women’s Economic Empowerment in Market Systems Development Programs authored by Linda Jones. Page 7.

Finding 13: Team members who interact with market actor partners need to communicate effectively—including conveying MSD, inclusion principles of MSD, and inclusion generally—to make their business case.

There are essential soft skills needed to engage the private sector, such as knowing how to approach and align with incentives and negotiate, and articulate the core concepts and principles of both MSD and inclusion in broadly understandable ways to make the business case.



A common practice is to “walk the talk” by hiring staff representative of the target group, in this case youth and/or women. In many cases, this requires capacity building to ensure responsibility for inclusion, and/or improve understanding of MSD and business development. A further requirement for inclusion is to be able to translate it into the language of the market actors. For example, YLA and DYNAMIC, who are committed to hiring young staff, invested considerable time and money to improve their basic capacity in terms of performance, time, and relationship management, as well as efficient deal making through market systems thinking, including making the business case for inclusion with market actors.

Feed the Future Inova found that when staff were able to articulate the need for inclusion, the business case was stronger. The Activity carried out research on input needs of female and male smallholder farmers, agents and information sources that play an influencing role, and social norms that influence these decisions and preferred marketing channels. They used the findings to generate interest of input distributors in the female market segment by strengthening the business case for adoption of gender-sensitive marketing practices.

PRISMA found a need to formally address the different vocabulary staff and partners used to describe the same intervention. Their GESI Strategy¹⁷ includes a guide to assist team members and partners’ staff with the translation of GESI into simple business terminology to simplify the task of articulating the business case. It also¹⁸ provides a tool to assist team members and partners’ staff with the translation of GESI into MSD to simplify the task of articulating the business case (see *Case Study 4*).

4. MEL: APPROACHES AND TOOLS

This section addresses findings related to the MEL systems the 15 Activities use.

Finding 14: There is a significant amount of gender and youth data that are captured and used to drive learning; however, limited standardization of indicators and inconsistencies in reporting makes it difficult to draw conclusions around MSD impacts on women and youth within and across Activities.



Activities use a diverse range of indicators in their reporting on women and youth in market systems. Very few Activities in this review consistently sex-disaggregate standard indicators (e.g., participation, jobs, incomes, yields, and capacities), with most (80 percent) of Activities selectively sex-disaggregating their data instead. This makes it difficult to fully assess whether inclusion elements and impacts are fully diffused across the Activity or relegated to a set of discrete partners and interventions. It is also



¹⁷ [https://aip-prisma.or.id/data/public/uploaded_file/2019-11-05_10-05-21am_GESI_Strategy_\(Version_1.6_-_October_28_2019\).pdf](https://aip-prisma.or.id/data/public/uploaded_file/2019-11-05_10-05-21am_GESI_Strategy_(Version_1.6_-_October_28_2019).pdf)

¹⁸ [https://aip-prisma.or.id/data/public/uploaded_file/2019-11-05_10-05-21am_GESI_Strategy_\(Version_1.6_-_October_28_2019\).pdf](https://aip-prisma.or.id/data/public/uploaded_file/2019-11-05_10-05-21am_GESI_Strategy_(Version_1.6_-_October_28_2019).pdf)

challenging to draw conclusions across Activities, because the data being reported are not comparable. Furthermore, very few Activities (less than 20 percent) report on age disaggregates, making it even less likely that cross-Activity comparisons can be drawn.

In addition to variations in the way Activities report sex and age disaggregates of standard indicators, reporting showed a broad range of custom gender- and youth-specific indicators. The custom indicators ranged from individual increases in access and agency to broader norms change at a systems level. These indicators were not standardized across Activities, and were often left to the discretion of the Activity to determine how to measure gender- and youth-specific outcomes. A sampling of custom indicators organized by unit of analysis and theme is presented in Exhibit 12 below.

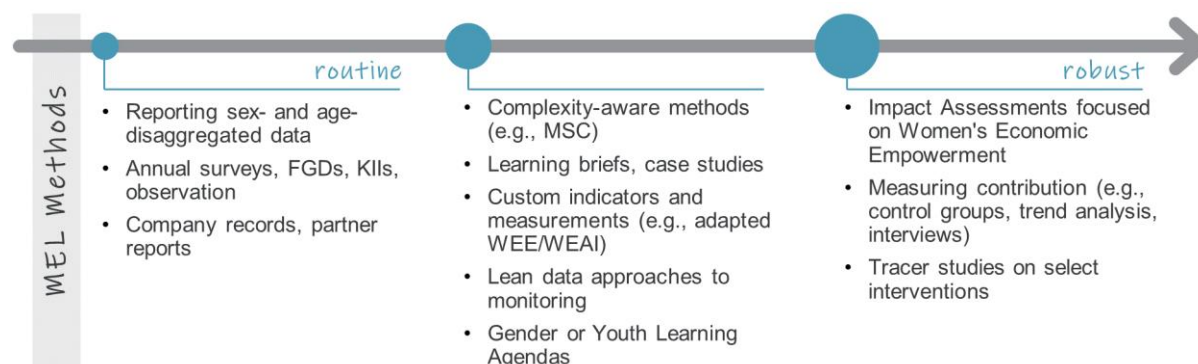
Exhibit 12: Custom indicators by unit of analysis

UNIT OF ANALYSIS	THEME	EXAMPLE INDICATORS
Enterprise	Inclusive business practices and benefits	• Number of Activity partners that adopt or improve practices that enable women to enter more beneficial roles • Private sector recognizes and rewards women as valuable employees, suppliers, distributors, and consumers • Number of business models where inclusive recruitment and employment practices are adopted • Number of goods and services designed to meet needs of women • Number of women in leadership/management positions within firms and producer networks
Enabling environment	Norms and rules	• Percentage of target participants who perceive changes in household and business attitudes regarding women's participation in markets • Percent of households reporting buying supplies, services, and products from women • Change(s) in perceptions of women's work outside the home • Reductions in perceived risk of violence • Degree of comfort in dealing with women community leaders • Number of public policies regarding youth employment • Number of market actors engaged to make changes to formal (policy, laws, regulations, procedures) rules that address market constraints for poor women • Changed perceptions around employment among youth, their family members, and employers
Sector or value chain	Economic opportunities supporting jobs and small and medium enterprises, including expansion of service markets, networks, and market linkages	• Number of youth-led input and output agents • Percentage of target participants who expanded their business networks and relationships • Number of new investment opportunities that benefit women and other socially excluded groups • Number of new media products that provide young people and their families with access to market information • Number of private-business service providers who offer gender and/or socially inclusive services

UNIT OF ANALYSIS	THEME	EXAMPLE INDICATORS
Individual and/or household	Access and agency	Percent of private job-matching and career guidance services that integrate GESI measures
		- Access to agricultural inputs, land, formal and informal finance, and business development services - Increases in education, and technical and vocational, business, and digital skills - Percent of interventions that specifically aim to provide more beneficial roles to poor women - Decision making and control over income - Well-being, including reduced time and labor burdens, manageable workload, and increased happiness - Leadership

Activities also reported using a diverse range of monitoring and evaluation methods to capture results and drive learning, even if the results of these methods were not always fully reported in project documents. Almost all Activities noted employing *routine* practices to capture and analyze Activity results related to women and youth. This typically entailed a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, including annual surveys, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and company records. Beyond routine practices, more than half of Activities were able to demonstrate progress toward more *robust* methods to measure intended and unintended consequences of market systems approaches on women and youth. Robust methods typically included more complexity-aware methods, lean data approaches, impact assessments, and tracer studies, among others. These methods were usually employed in two ways: (1) to help monitor and support ongoing learning and adaptation during implementation, and (2) to evaluate impacts of Activity approaches and interventions on women and/or youth. A grouping of monitoring and evaluation methods used, including the progression from routine to more robust methods, can be found in [Exhibit 13](#) below.

Exhibit 13: Routine to robust MEL methods



Despite the range of data Activities collect through a variety of monitoring and evaluation methods, these data are inconsistently reported on and appear to be limited to discrete partners and interventions within Activities. There are many examples where outcome data are selectively sex-disaggregated—some Activities' interventions are sex-disaggregated while others are not. There are also examples of specialized learning studies done on specific sets of youth- or women-targeted interventions, which provide great learning on how effective these interventions have been in reaching women and youth, but are limited in what they can say about the broader portfolio of interventions

being implemented. This makes it difficult to fully understand impacts of MSD approaches on women and youth both within and across Activities. Notably missing is evidence of systemic change specifically related to inclusion. Where Activities use tools like the *Adopt, Adapt, Respond and Expand* framework to design a vision of systemic change for inclusive business models, measurements to capture evidence of this are lacking and/or un-reported.

Finding 15: Ongoing monitoring and specialized learning studies conducted throughout implementation help Activities tweak approaches to deliver better results.

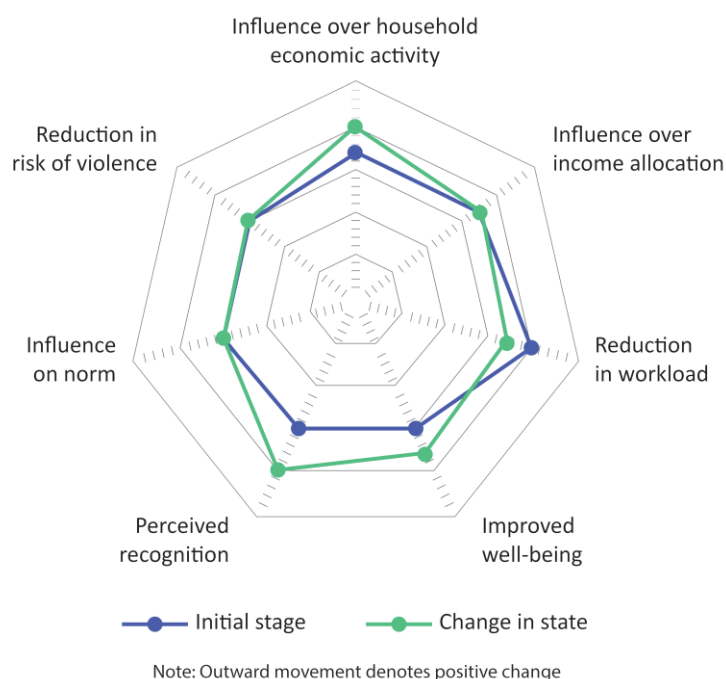


While not widespread, there were examples of Activities conducting ongoing monitoring and prioritizing specialized learning studies throughout implementation to track positive and negative consequences, improve approaches, and deliver better results for women and youth. This allowed Activities to observe system shifts and quickly perceive trends associated with known risks. In the case of **RisiAlbania**, they use a monitoring tool to observe known challenges they may encounter, including potential displacement from job formalization and job sustainability for youth. They also organize regular learning and evaluation field visits to assess qualitative changes that occur at the partner level and triangulate these data through market surveys. In other cases, Activities used monitoring tools and studies to make scale, adapt, or exit decisions around interventions or approaches.

MDF conducted research to prove their hypothesis that agency and access were critical to WEE. Unable to identify a device to measure and crucially assess changes in agency, they created their own. Their tool looks at seven domains of change to determine the effectiveness of an intervention to improve WEE. [Exhibit 14](#) from Papua New Guinea represents agency reported before and after a hybrid pig rearing intervention. These pigs required more care and attention than conventional pigs, resulting in higher workload. However, the other agency improvements offset the heavier workload and women continued to rear the hybrid pigs. A measurement tool looking primarily at income and household income decision making would have missed the important dynamics at play.

Exhibit 14: Example of MDF's WEE change tool

WEE changes in Papua New Guinea-based project led by MDF in partnership with Central Highlands Feed Mill Ltd.



Source: MDF. 2018. *Beyond Income – A Critical Analysis of Agency Measurement in Economic Programming*

Activities that employed ongoing monitoring and learning tactics were often aware of the benefits, indicating that they gave “much needed clarity as to the efficacy and impact of the intervention.” However, they also noted these methods were expensive, thus limiting the set of interventions or learning priorities that could be more fully monitored and evaluated.

Finding 16: Market actors are central to MEL efforts in MSD programming. Activities that allow market actors to own data management and decision-making processes show promising evidence of accelerating buy-in and win-win outcomes.

Most of the Activities in this study rely on market actors and partners to collect and report data relevant to Activity indicators and results. While little was mentioned in Activity documents about the interest and capacity of firms to collect and report on data relevant to women and youth, and challenges associated with this, several Activities reported on the transformative effect on their programs of having firms own data management and decision-making processes.

In the case of **Naatal Mbay**, the Activity helped establish database monitoring systems in each of the CNs (or producer networks) facilitated through the program. These systems allowed for each network to track and monitor their own data, including, for example, women’s differential access to resources. As a result, some of the CNs now set higher targets for women’s participation and benefit within their network.

Feed the Future Inova works with input firms to introduce a customer relationship management system that allows them to capture sex-disaggregated customer data and monitor effectiveness of different marketing strategies. When paired with stakeholder feedback surveys and partner customer-centricity scorecards, the Activity *“shifts data gathering from a transactional, top-down mindset to a transformative, bottom-up one that aligns the M&E [monitoring and evaluation] function with a facilitation approach.”*

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Value chain Activities have made considerable progress in understanding and shifting social norms to close gender and age gaps, reduce constraints, and increase opportunities and benefits for women, youth, and other marginalized groups. While many value chain interventions address key constraints, it remains challenging for them to undertake improvements at the systems level, tackling root causes that drive inequalities between dominant and marginalized groups.

MSD seeks to make the entire market system more competitive, resilient, and inclusive through facilitated interventions. It aims to multiply impact and amplify change at the system level, including addressing the biases and inequalities inherent within economic and non-economic spheres. Because MSD strives to address root causes and facilitate systemic change, it has the opportunity to sustainably improve market functions and shift paradigms that currently maintain social and economic inequality. This is new territory with profound implications and opportunities to promote inclusion, equality, and resilience for all members of a community. Many implementers are learning how to better understand these dynamics and incorporate them as an integral part of MSD approaches.

The researchers believe that one of the most interesting outcomes of these Activities is the ability to facilitate new and innovative opportunities in non-traditional roles and sectors for youth's and women's inclusion. For example, when childcare services are made available and address the significant and often unacknowledged issue of women's unpaid care work and labor burdens, additional development benefits can arise. These benefits range from increased time for mothers and, more specifically, single mothers and grandmothers (who may be raising grandchildren), to earn money and spend time with their families. When women defy social norms by driving tractors, they change local perceptions of what work or roles women can do, which can have impacts that extend far beyond the actual job of tractor operator.

The gaps, omissions, and limitations of the landscape analysis shed light on the present state of youth's and women's inclusion in MSD. The selected Activities vary in the level of development of their gender, youth, and inclusion strategies, models, and interventions. Because the universe of MSD Activities is small, there is often a limited pool of gender and youth experts who contribute to this area of practice, which results in shared expertise and approaches. For example, ÉLAN RDC and PRISMA share the same GESI lead, allowing for experience from one Activity to inform the other. This extends to WEE frameworks, implementation tools, capacity-development resources for staff, and learning across Activities. However, the diversity among these Activities (e.g., different contexts, sectors, donors, and objectives) challenges “apples-to-apples” comparison and, unfortunately, makes it difficult to draw cross-Activity comparisons, thus weakening conclusions. An area largely missing in this analysis is the focus on the intersection of age and gender within MSD approaches and interventions. Regardless of whether programs targeted women and/or youth or mainstreamed them, approaches specific to young women's inclusion were largely absent. The authors stress that this landscape analysis is a starting point from

which more fulsome study should spring. A list of additional research questions inspired by this study is found in [Annex 3](#).

Overall, MSD represents an important evolution in the development of economic opportunities for women and youth. MSD approaches have shown promising evidence of delivering benefit for adult women when mindful of their needs, the market opportunity, and unanticipated risks. For youth, it is unclear whether MSD, as currently practiced, can provide a comprehensive answer to the challenge of their development over other programmatic entry points. The youth Activities included in this analysis were able to develop market-led income generation and employment opportunities at scale, which may be sufficient to meet youth’s immediate needs, but is likely not sufficient to deliver on comprehensive youth development.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions drawn from the findings are organized according to the learning question they seek to address. Where multiple conclusions address one learning question, a brief summary is provided to further explore how conclusions address sub-questions.

What opportunities and constraints have MSD programs identified for women and/or youth in agriculture and supporting markets?

This question is answered directly with a list found in [Finding 3](#), [Exhibit 4](#) and [Exhibit 5](#). This list is comprehensive when aggregated, but when assessed at the Activity-level, the opportunities and constraints presented vary in quality and quantity. The variances in identified opportunities and constraints are due to differing viewpoints on when and how this information should be generated, and what to do with the data once collected. There is a tension between starting with what women/youth need as opposed to focusing on market constraints and opportunities. While these are not mutually exclusive, there is a need for reconciling to paint a full picture of the strategy within an evolving document, such as a theory of change or results chain.

In general, approaches to include youth in MSD Activities lag behind those to facilitate women’s inclusion. Activities use CLA and adaptive management techniques to identify and reframe women’s and youth’s constraints and opportunities, and apply insights into programmatic decisions that fuel inclusion efforts. CLA is critical to sharpen youth- and women-focused interventions, but cannot solely be relied on to reveal opportunities and constraints. Extensive gender and youth formative analysis seemed to be an indicator of how rapidly inclusion was embraced, and how quickly staff were trained and/or bought into inclusion efforts.

Conclusion 1:	Associated Findings
Using MSD to engage youth appears to lag behind women’s inclusion in MSD. Youth in MSD is arguably more complex and a less explored area of practice.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9

As the findings illustrated, while there is a growing collection of resources (tools, guidelines, and learning documents) to aid Activities in integrating women in MSD, they are largely absent for youth. A reason could be that dynamics behind women's inclusion have been studied extensively and have evolved over a longer period. Women’s and adolescent girls’ opportunities are largely dictated by social norms, which include their educational attainment, reproduction rate, and role and position within the family. MSD

approaches have presented some strategies to overcome this. Women-targeted and mainstreaming Activities reviewed did not differentiate the opportunities and challenges of women based on age differences.

For female and male youth, there are equally complex but less understood challenges to inclusion. Some parameters for youth are related to their gender, developmental stage, and legal and social norms regarding how and when they enter the workforce. Overcoming traditional roles and responsibilities of young people in agrarian but modernizing communities, where their parents and community still heavily influence them, is a unique challenge. Based on the Activities reviewed here, the tools and methods to address these challenges using an MSD approach have not yet been clearly articulated and remain a work in progress. There have been real, tangible gains in the development of jobs and income-generation opportunities. However, these gains remain anecdotal in comparison to those for women and require further study to fully understand their potential at scale.

Conclusion 2	Associated Findings
MSD can create transformative opportunities for youth and women, in both traditional and non-traditional sectors and roles. This process can take years of partners’ engagement.	• 3, 4, 5, 9, 14

There are few but promising examples of transformational roles for women and youth found within this cohort of Activities. Most Activities used approaches that focused on identifying end-market-oriented and demand-driven opportunities for inclusive growth. This included aligning supply with profitable unmet market demand, and development of input and service networks responsive to producer and consumer demands. This is often the starting point for MSD programs, and all Activities had some element of this approach in their programming.

When Activities employed more robust MSD tactics, transformational benefits for youth and women emerged, although they are still anecdotal and/or found in small clusters of activities that may be only attributable to a narrow selection of market actors. These tactics include:

- Looking beyond entry points in specific sectors to supporting markets as key opportunities to address women- and youth-specific constraints (including non-traditional supporting markets, such as childcare and labor market information services)
- Having analytical tools to identify not just symptoms of women’s and youth’s exclusion, but actual root causes that hinder participation and benefit in multiple sectors
- Active CLA culture, including ongoing monitoring of approaches and iteration, responsiveness to market dynamics, and constant trying of new things
- Articulating clear rationale in causal logic documents around how MSD tactics were specifically to lead to the promotion of women’s and youth’s participation and benefit
- Improving upon typical MSD tactics to engage partners, including building in different ways to identify the “gender or youth leverage” and structuring incentives
- Clearly articulating when there is a need for higher intensity facilitation tactics with distinct target groups and market actors; also, having a plan of progression over time to more light-touch support

- Taking a long-term approach (2 to 3 years or more) to engage market actors in inclusion activities over business and market wins

A better understanding of how to specifically develop and incentivize non-traditional opportunities is missing from reviewed literature. There are signs and signals that it is possible and, when successful, there is potential for systemic change. However, there are insufficient data to determine whether other factors may have been responsible for success. If so, this would challenge the ability to reproduce outcomes.

<i>Conclusion 3:</i>	<i>Associated Findings</i>
CLA and other adaptive-management techniques, coupled with leadership buy-in and empowered staff, fuel inclusion efforts, but not on their own.	• 4, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15

While technically part and parcel of MSD, use of CLA varies. When Activity leadership embraces CLA and finds bold, innovative staff able to confront the status quo, there is an increased ability to rethink systems and forge win-win relationships. Regardless of how deeply youth and/or women were included at the outset, Activities that practiced CLA made incremental or significant improvements to program design, implementation, and measurement based on learning. Making the business case for youth's and women's inclusion where market opportunity exists requires experimentation to determine the appropriate incentives or other support.

CLA was often mentioned as influencing staffing and the overall approach to inclusion. In other words, the team culture with regards to inclusion of women and/or youth frequently changed over the course of an intervention. Partners integrated principles of inclusion within their own internal staffing by hiring more women, training men to be gender champions, and making sure female staff had voice within the workplace. The CLA mindset, coupled with competencies related to intersectional thinking, accelerated staff's capacity to reach broader goals. However, CLA resources do not explicitly call out the importance of the CLA mindset to extend to inclusion writ large. USAID's 2017 literature review entitled [What Difference Does CLA Make to Development?](#) and USAID's 2019 [Guide to Hiring Adaptive Employees](#) make no mention of gender, women, youth, or inclusion.

While adaptive management has a critical role to play in improving inclusion outcomes or even launching them, on its own, it will not ensure that youth and women are meaningfully included or that gaps will be addressed. Activities that performed significant participatory research at the outset seemed much better informed about women and youth's issues and prioritized sensitivity to the needs among staff earlier. This is not meant to minimize the power of pivots, but rather, flag that some of these can be avoided with appropriate levels of research. For example, at least two Activities pivoted based on experiencing challenges in women's mobility. This is a common problem that may have been understood in the course of a light-touch gender analysis.

N.B. This conclusion is based on the bulk of the Activities reviewed. The authors recognize that YLA's "design in reverse" strategy is in contradiction with this conclusion, although the intervention has yielded some exceptional opportunities for youth. See [Case Study 2](#) for more detail.



In which ways have MSD program approaches attempted to facilitate win-win market opportunities with a focus on women and/or youth?

MSD Activities and those employing MSD approaches that are included in this analysis attempted to facilitate win–win opportunities for women and youth in agriculture and eight supporting markets: entrepreneurship support services, input and equipment supply, extension and advisory services, finance, childcare services, media and communications, labor market information services, and technical and vocational training. A classification of sector-specific tactics used is presented in [Exhibit 9](#). However, details and explanation were missing from the documents reviewed, which created an incomplete picture in most cases of how Activities: (1) identify where market constraints and women’s/youth’s constraints intersect, creating potential for aligned incentives, and/or (2) leverage opportunities that satisfy both a market prospect and the ability to positively affect women and youth. The information was the most robust around the business case, a commonly cited MSD tactic used to clearly align incentives and demonstrate “proof” of the financial and social benefits of greater inclusion of women and youth to market actors. This was the most effective at accelerating buy-in and win–win outcomes when market actor’s own data collection and reporting efforts directly affirmed and reaffirmed the business case, and could be used to inform their decision making.

Calibrating partners’ incentives and aligning them with the needs of women and youth is foundational to ensuring that MSD approaches can achieve sustainable inclusion results at scale. In addition, Activities also need to guide market actors using varying levels of facilitation to experiment with innovations and new models, sensitize them to the benefits of inclusion, and develop their capacity to make informed decisions that benefit their bottom line and promote development outcomes. Moreover, a commonly cited challenge to finding win–win opportunities was that constraints for women and/or youth were not always immediately something that a market actor had a clear incentive to address (e.g., women’s unpaid care work). This is where Activities looked to partners within the public sector, civil society organizations, NGOs, media partners, and academic institutions to more clearly align objectives and incentives. In some cases, Activities facilitated multi-actor partnerships to make sure results were not only sustainable, but that each actor had a defined role that clearly aligned benefits for women and youth with the set of incentives that appealed directly to that actor.

<i>Conclusion 4</i>	<i>Associated Findings</i>
A well-conceived business case is the most commonly cited tactic to develop market opportunities for women and youth; yet, Activities struggle to make the case for women and, to a greater extent, youth.	• 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13

There are a wealth of tactics Activities use to engage market actors as partners, which differ by context and opportunities presented in the agricultural and supporting market system. “Making the business case” is largely reported as a critical element of partnership building; yet, the many steps involved in building convincing cases that clearly align business incentives with development outcomes are not well outlined.

The barriers to making a successful case as reported are:

- The slow pace of mindset change with regards to social norms, and realizing the market value of including women and/or youth
- The business case itself not being viable
- Perceived risk (requiring offset through market facilitation)

- The need for traditional development actors to acquire an understanding of businesses and “speak their language”

Typically, the business case offers benefits to market actors that are financial (revenue growth or cost savings) or non-financial (brand or reputation). Identifying partners who are less financially motivated, require little buy-in, or are already champions, such as social enterprise, seems to be the low-hanging fruit. Finding the commercial win–win scenarios can be much more time and resource-intensive. Opportunities in non-traditional sectors can require more time, effort, and sophisticated negotiation skills to broker as norms and new considerations are taken into account (such as community perception and safety).

Because it is a challenge to develop a successful business case, particularly in non-traditional sectors and roles, there is a risk of creating perverse incentives among implementing partners by requiring strict age and gender targets. To demonstrate early success and reach targets, implementing partners could resort to higher intensity approaches without clearly identifying and convincing market actors of the win–win opportunity. Businesses, in turn, may take advantage of donor interest and funds to employ inclusive business models that, ultimately, are not adopted, sustained, or scaled due to limited buy-in and ownership from the beginning.



What were the impacts or outcomes of MSD approaches that focus on women and youth (e.g., achievements, shortcomings, and positive and negative unintended consequences)?

The impacts or outcomes of MSD approaches that focus on women and youth were reported inconsistently by Activities and across Activities. Activities that took a more intentional approach were more likely to have developed MEL frameworks or learning report series that allowed them to disaggregate outcomes for youth and women. Without MEL frameworks that respond to more than generic indicators, such as jobs created or increased income, data on youth and women are too general to draw conclusions.

Conclusion 5

The outcomes of youth and women in MSD programs are inconsistently reported. Therefore, it is difficult to draw solid conclusions related to the consequences of the approach to serve their interests.

Associated Findings

- 2, 4, 9, 14, 15

A major challenge to this landscape review was the ability to determine how and to what extent women and youth benefited from the intervention at an aggregate level and in comparison, with other (adult male) cohorts in any specific instance. It was similarly challenging to determine the extent to which the intervention offered the promise of sustainability or scale.

While some Activities consistently collected and reported sex-disaggregated data, the way they presented this information helped to either clarify or obscure impacts on women and youth. One Activity noted that across the program, their numbers for women looked excellent, with 80 percent of participants with increased economic opportunities being female. However, when looking more closely at the distribution of benefits across program objectives, the concentration of these impacts was largely attributed to only one project component. In other component areas, women were only a quarter of the participants reached. Other examples of potentially obfuscating data involved reporting only

disaggregates on individual-level indicators (as opposed to including enterprise-level indicator disaggregates) or only disaggregated data on indicators tied to women- and youth-targeted interventions, which impeded the ability of the program or donor to know whether women and youth were included in and benefitted from broader program activities.

<i>Conclusion 6:</i>	<i>Associated Findings</i>
Being intentional about gender integration in planning, implementation, staffing and leadership, and MEL approaches leads to increased evidence of positive impacts related to women in MSD programs	• 1, 2, 3, 6, 11, 14, 15, 16

Because impact data were not available for most Activities, the research team has defined a comprehensive MSD approach to include youth and/or women as those that have facilitated opportunities and analyzed them with a gender- or youth-specific lens, resulting in pivots or minor improvements as required. These Activities have the following characteristics:

- Clear vision for inclusion and buy-in (from staff and leadership)
- Well-articulated starting points informed by assessments and analyses, which may or may not be elaborated in the form of a strategy; they could use generic or bespoke gender assessment tools
- Inclusion of developmental outcomes for youth and/or women in results chains
- Developed gender inclusion frameworks and guidelines
- Iteration on strategies to make a business case and otherwise incentivize market actors
- Embracing of a learning culture and use of adaptive management approaches to rapidly respond to constraints and opportunities through pivots
- Employment of distinct youth and gender MEL practices

The only identifiable commonality between programs with these characteristics was the existence of a strong CLA culture and the ethos of devolving responsibility to all staff. Making gender everyone's business has some downside (such as assigning accountability to lay people), but overall ensures that responsibility sits close to market actors and translates into an organization-wide culture that permeates down from leadership.

Donor requirements do make a considerable difference. In the case of DFAT-funded programs, implementing partners noted that while they were independently committed to gender inclusion, the directive for their Activity ultimately came from the donor (see DFAT's [Market Systems Development Operational Guidance Note](#)). USAID's guidance on inclusion is not as strongly articulated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While the following recommendations speak broadly to both implementers and donors, recommendations that are donor-specific are noted at the end of each section.

Dedicate resources to better understanding youth in MSD and limitations of the MSD approach to meet youth developmental needs more broadly. The authors consider youth in MSD a distinct practice that should have clear rules and standards that drive the market's ability to

bridge the range of deficits that affect youth, particularly rural youth. Specifically, consider MSD approaches in all youth development programming and as complementary to positive youth development (PYD) programs focused on economic opportunities. It may be more practical to apply an MSD approach to facilitate access to jobs, self-employment, and finance in youth programming, without being beholden to facilitating all program interventions through market actors and, most notably, education for younger youth. See [Case Study 2](#), for specific examples of how skill deficits in youth have been addressed through various means of facilitation.

Additional recommendations include:

- Ensure youth-targeted activities employ a separate gender and age lens (particularly where gender and age intersect).
- As an innovative outlier, further study YLA’s “design in reverse” approach to engaging youth by working with market actors.
- Further study on the limitations of MSD to overcome gender inequality where conservative social norms exist, and identify where funds should be earmarked for high-intensity facilitation in these contexts. For both youth’s and women’s economic empowerment, there seems to be a global recognition that MSD has limitations, but this is not well understood and defined.
- Determine the limitations of MSD to serve youth across all their needs and conceptualize how MSD complements PYD.

Donor recommendations:

- Further study is required to shed light on the limitations of MSD to overcome gender inequality where conservative social norms exist, and identify where funds should be earmarked for high-intensity delivery in these contexts. For both youth’s and women’s economic empowerment, there seems to be a global recognition that MSD has limitations, but this is not well understood and defined.
- Continue to build the evidence base and create a roadmap to illustrate how MSD complements PYD.

Further develop tools for planning, measurement, and reporting of youth and gender benefits, risks, and challenges in MSD. Specific recommendations are:

- **Planning:** Include women and/or youth developmental outcomes in results chains, or append them to ensure they are not lost in siloed documentation and that accountability is assigned to program (not technical) staff. There are many tools and examples for doing so ([see Annex 2](#)). Do not assume market assessment specialists will apply a gender and/or youth lens. Formative research should shed light on risks (e.g., potential for increased gender-based violence) and programs should integrate measurement practices to capture unintended results.
- **Measurement:** Standard MEL approaches for MSD need to be developed to better understand how and whether MSD works for youth, particularly at scale. These should use gender-/youth-sensitive research methods to measure changes along the results chains and permit the assessment of the *contribution* of MSD tactics to resulting change in women’s or youth’s participation or benefit.

- **Additional Study:** Perform a comparative review of currently used market analysis, measurement tools, and program frameworks that integrate youth and/or gender lenses in MSD to establish best practices in this space.

Donor recommendations:

- **Guidelines:** Donors should issue guidelines for inclusion of women and/or youth in MSD (perhaps based on the comparative review recommended above). This could include the minimum analysis and planning requirements, a guideline for MEL frameworks (particularly for youth), reporting requirements demanding sex and age disaggregation for all program activities, and emphasis on MSD tactics vs. MSD outcomes. These should ensure inclusion of indicators specific to gender and youth, and establish sex- and age-disaggregated baseline and set targets. Despite this recommendation, implementers cannot be hamstrung by overly prescriptive standards. Donors need to allow implementers to fail, while building in accountability mechanisms.

Recruit staff prepared to work toward inclusion, even if the organizational structure is in flux. Most programs end up devolving responsibility for gender. Staff recruitment should attempt to identify individuals with the belief system and personal characteristics that favor gender and youth inclusivity; responsibility for inclusion should be built into staff performance indicators. This could require capacity building, incentivization, and formal recognition. The “CLA mindset” (at least for these types of Activities) should be broadened so the curiosity it values is also steered toward effective inclusion. This will permit making “gender and youth everyone’s business” easier.

Donor Recommendations:

- Donors can consider integrating inclusion into key personnel responsibilities and qualifications, and revisit the “CLA mindset” guidance to include a basic proclivity toward inclusion.

Use CLA as a tool to deepen women’s and youth’s inclusion. A healthy balance of early planning and CLA-driven reflection and improvements is key to inclusion. The practice should not replace or assume that a woman- or youth-only program requires less or no gender/youth assessments at the outset, nor should it delay calling out targets for youth’s/women’s development.

Donor recommendations:

- Because of the tremendous value of CLA as a means to dramatically improve inclusion efforts, donors should continue to promote the practice, while ensuring implementers perform critical formative analyses to minimize unnecessary pivots.

Use MSD as a means to identify win-win opportunities in non-traditional sectors and roles. Broader social norms change needs to complement business case tactics to be impactful and extend systemic change beyond individual partnership agreements. Transformative impact is possible when partners:

- Identify lead firms with strong leadership and knowledge of social norms and significant clout among sector actors, and get them to buy into inclusion of women and youth. This can have significant impacts on changing the attitudes and business behaviors of other firms (e.g., crowding-in, replication).

- Recognize that the best opportunities may be hidden gems. Opportunities in non-traditional sectors and roles require time and investigation to develop, because they may respond to constraints in a manner less direct than typical opportunities.
- Take a step-by-step approach to inclusion. Partners could be more comfortable with piloting and reaching proof of concept to mitigate investment risks before making a more fulsome commitment.

Donor recommendations:

- When transformative gender objectives are sought, ensure that (1) proposals and implementation plans specifically call out how non-traditional opportunities (roles and sectors) will be investigated, and (2) MEL frameworks include indicators or qualitative research to measure the domains of gender transformation beyond income (social norms, gender roles, empowerment, agency, systemic improvements, or other).

Implementing partners need to ensure risks are anticipated and planned for. This includes risk identification in both formative research and ongoing monitoring, and risk mitigation planning that is well-articulated and integrated into results chains, intervention plans, and other planning documents. Specialized learning studies and complexity-aware MEL methods can help Activities harvest unintended consequences (those not originally anticipated and planned for).

CASE STUDIES

This section highlights overarching learning drawn across multiple projects, as well as critical themes for further exploration that may provide even greater insights into effective methods and results to address gender and youth inclusion in market systems development (MSD) programs. Four case studies zoom in on interventions, approaches, and tactics implementing partners use to illustrate the opportunity, dynamism, flexibility, risk, and limitations of and within MSD practices to address the inclusion of youth and women. Through these cases, the research team explores how MSD approaches can deliver on impacts for women and youth and the necessary conditions to achieve the results, derived from a range of implementing partners' and market actors' iterative learning and testing of what does and does not work in their contexts.

The landscape analysis and case studies were limited in their ability to determine conclusively whether *inclusive MSD approaches alone* can meaningfully address and facilitate women's and youth's empowerment, or stimulate systemic change to reduce gender and social gaps. However, the landscape analysis and these case studies provide important evidence that MSD programs can: (1) meaningfully integrate the inclusion of women and youth as part of MSD, (2) ensure women and youth experience benefits of MSD interventions, and (3) promote at least some social norms change within the scope or related to the specific objectives of the projects.

The case studies focus on four learning themes examined through project document review and key informant interviews with 18 individuals: six directors, four gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)/gender advisors, six market actors, and two staff.

CASE STUDY 1: ÉLAN RDC: Advancing Women's Role in Agricultural Market Systems addresses how implementing partners identify non-traditional market opportunities and leverage them to promote greater inclusion of women. The case study explores which analytical tools ÉLAN RDC applied to identify opportunities, specific gender constraints they targeted, and tactics they used to facilitate women's empowerment.

CASE STUDY 2: YLA and DYNAMIC: Facilitation Intensity in Youth MSD in Uganda explores two programs in Uganda that approach youth engagement through MSD in different ways. The case explores how facilitation—working through market-actor partners to provide services and activities—affects the range of youth development components that can be addressed within an MSD program.

CASE STUDY 3: RisiAlbania: Inclusive Partner Engagement Strategies focuses on strategies for identifying and engaging private-sector partners that can stimulate job creation for male and female youth in agriculture and support markets programs. This case offers a good example of how sector selection with a heavy focus on youth impact as a criteria, and youth-sensitive market analysis, can help Activities identify enterprises to co-invest with.

CASE STUDY 4: PRISMA: Effective Business Cases and Engagement Approaches for Women's Inclusion describes tested, context-appropriate tools and approaches PRISMA developed to engage and build the capacity of market actors to integrate gender considerations and promote women's inclusion into interventions. This approach centered heavily on developing evidence-based, targeted business

cases that demonstrated how businesses could improve performance by better understanding and addressing gender gaps and dynamics that affect their operations or business models.

METHODOLOGY

The Feed the Future Advancing Women's Empowerment (AWE) program team conducted a desk review of program documents, including gender and youth assessments, analyses, and strategies; gender- and youth-sensitive market systems analyses, maps, and diagnostics; theories of change; annual and quarterly performance reports; relevant evaluation or learning studies; and other applicable documents. To complement the document review, AWE conducted key informant interviews and direct email correspondence to clarify information, fill in key gaps, and gather additional insights for a subset of projects. Both the primary and secondary collected data informed the data analysis, conclusions, and recommendations. The Landscape Analysis report identified emerging insights and areas for potential deeper learning, which apprised the selection of case study themes.

The AWE research team shared recommendations with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and collaborated in the final selection of case studies. In addition to exploring key learning themes, the research team and USAID agreed on the selection criteria that included representation of at least two youth Activities and one Feed the Future Activity. The research team also considered a range in locations and markets, distinct gender and age challenges, and intended and unintended consequences of the Activity, among other criteria. Once selected, the AWE team conducted tailored interviews via Microsoft Teams and Skype with at least three key informants per Activity, including at least one market actor for the majority of cases. To ensure accuracy and completeness of notes, the team recorded and transcribed all interviews in addition to researchers' own notes. The team analyzed the data, then verified findings and conclusions through several rounds of emails and reviews with implementing partners, followed by sharing a courtesy draft of the case study report. The case study learning questions are found in each.

LIMITATIONS

The team originally planned to conduct in-person interviews and field visits to collect the information for the case studies. Travel and social distancing restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic required adjusting this methodology, so the team organized key informant interviews through videoconferencing platforms. Although discussions were rich in context and insights, the interviews, which averaged about 60 minutes per participant, were limited in the amount and type of information that could be conveyed. Due to COVID-19-related constraints, the research team was also unable to interview women and youth participants of the programs. However, the team identified key informant interview participants based on their ability to provide a broad spectrum of viewpoints and designed interview questions to address youth perspectives. These factors may have contributed to information gaps that could have affected some conclusions and recommendations. To address some of these limitations, the research team provided each implementing partner with the opportunity to fill gaps through case review, discuss and validate findings, and add context and detail, as necessary.

The bulk of the programming—and the reporting about it—occurred in a pre-COVID-19 environment. The analysis contained in this report, therefore, maintains that lens. However, the research team acknowledges that the pandemic will heavily affect the conditions and contexts where the programs work, and future interventions will likely need to account for COVID-19 recovery efforts and the impact of the pandemic on households, communities, and social, economic, and food systems globally.

SELECT FINDINGS FROM ACROSS THE CASES

Following is a selection of “top” findings:

On partnership engagement: ÉLAN RDC, Promoting Rural Incomes through Support for Markets in Agriculture (PRISMA), RisiAlbania, and Youth Leadership for Agriculture (YLA) all noted that approaching the partnership as a business venture is effective for implementing partners working with private-sector partners. The private sector will not likely engage in inclusion interventions or activities outside of the scope of their business activities at the outset of the relationship, but may look to local civil society organizations (CSOs) to fill gaps in the sector. For youth specifically, the Driving Youth-led New Agribusiness and Microenterprise in Northern Uganda (DYNAMIC) and YLA cases show that employers, buyers, and financial service providers will increase their understanding and willingness to support youth and some of their developmental needs, but this happens over a long time period. When it comes to younger youth (aged 10–17), private-sector partnerships are less fruitful. Younger youth require developmentally appropriate support (i.e., parent and community engagement, life skills, and financial assets) that may be best facilitated through high-intensity private-sector partnerships.

On donor influence: ÉLAN RDC, DYNAMIC, and YLA, and cases demonstrate how donors influence initial program design and set expectations of desired outcomes beyond women and/or youth participation targets. Some components prescribed in donor solicitations (sexual and reproductive health, vocational skills, life skills, formal education) may not respond to preexisting or potential services in each market and, therefore, encourage higher levels of facilitation to comply with contractual obligations.

On design: The PRISMA and RisiAlbania cases highlight the importance of selecting the right sectors, particularly in supporting markets, to achieve outcomes for male and female youth. This often goes beyond looking at where male and female youth currently participate, and requires assessing end markets and value chain upgrades that can bring about specific opportunities for youth. The ÉLAN RDC case adds that an easily accessible framework helps Activity staff understand and operationalize gender and women’s economic empowerment strategies in MSD projects. Consistent and strategic use of data is needed to prove and improve the business case for upgrading women’s roles in market systems and facilitate improvements in program performance and impact.

On monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL): The PRISMA case stresses the importance of monitoring intervention outcomes and sharing results with partners so they can see the benefits in concrete quantitative terms. This allows for solidifying their belief in the intervention and ultimately, builds their accountability for inclusion results. DYNAMIC, RisiAlbania, and YLA used different approaches, but ultimately highlighted that a mix of tools and methods is required to capture nuanced unintended consequences, such as gender-based differences in training outcomes.

On staffing and capacity: Although a common theme, it is most explicit in the ÉLAN RDC and PRISMA cases that internal capacity building and staff ownership are critical for operationalizing successful gender strategies and approaches. Staff buy-in and ownership need to happen before partners can be expected to buy into inclusion interventions.

On engaging young people: DYNAMIC, RisiAlbania, and YLA demonstrate that when presented with off-farm, market-led opportunities as agents or salaried employees, youth are willing and eager to work in the agriculture sector. Discounting inputs, linking youth to markets, and incentivizing off-farm market-driven skills development and opportunities are the primary intervention areas. Youth engaged in

production compose the bulk of Activity participants and will continue to do so. These youth require a wide range of support, from basic education and technical skills to access to land and financial services. The engagement of younger youth is a challenge to implementers for reasons primarily related to their developmental stage, such as low levels of maturity and poor access to assets, land, and skills.

CONCLUSIONS

While the areas of inquiry varied, the team identified a few common threads across the cases. Principally, encouraging market actors to lead inclusion efforts is a long-term process. The success of this process is dependent on the implementing partner's development of a convincing business case and a step-by-step relationship-building approach. As stated in the landscape analysis findings, business development staff need to have specific skills and mindset to perform these functions. The case to promote greater inclusion may not be immediately evident and could require that Activities start by investing in developing relationships with market actors that would, over time, evolve to allow the possibility for greater inclusion. The time it takes to achieve this process will vary and is dependent on factors such as availability of data, capacity of staff, and partners' willingness, as well as what is happening in the market; Activities will need to be willing to invest time and resources in cultivating a partner relationship before it can move to the greater inclusion phase, which means this strategy might represent a certain level of program risk.

Sector selection is also a key consideration for women's and youth's inclusion. Effective sector selection involves not only identifying sectors where women and youth currently participate, but also opportunities for upgrades and role expansion that can facilitate greater market inclusion of women and youth. Paying attention to the roles of youth and women can result in "multiplier" effects. For example, empowered youth agents can recruit other youth agents and seek out youth producers to bring in more peers into the market. Success of youth in markets inspires additional youth engagement.

Unfortunately, market incentives and women's and youth's needs are not always in alignment. Some key needs, such as education, sexual and reproductive health, and life skills, do not figure within the interest of the private sector, or the private sector does not have the will/skill to take them on. In some cases, the perception of misalignment with market-based interests can change over a period of years, as a partner begins to see linkages between consumer, employee, or supplier well-being and personal development and their bottom line. In other cases, MSD Activities may shift to less facilitative tactics or engage other actors (such as local CSOs) to fill in critical roles. This challenge is especially heightened when addressing the needs or promoting the inclusion of younger youth, which represents an important limitation of the MSD approach. The limitation is not necessarily restrictive, but flags that a different level of expectation and an openness to innovation are required to create new pathways to serve the younger cohort and their developmental needs, in addition to their livelihood options.

Effective MEL that incorporates targets and measures of women's and youth's participation and benefit is essential to develop an understanding of project impacts on youth and women along the project cycle. However, due to their evolving and flexible nature, MSD Activities are challenged to develop and implement effective measurements. It is important to strengthen MEL practices to not only make the business case to staff and partners for greater inclusion of women and youth, but also understand what is or is not working.

Finally, project data demonstrate limited early evidence of systemic change in some of the inclusive business models, typically in smaller markets, where it is easier to exert influence. However, intentionally inclusive interventions depend on a slowly acquired level of private sector's buy-in, which

might not be possible to obtain and scale across a broader Activity or market. In the case of youth-targeted Activities, the results are scattered and largely in a pilot phase. In short, there are strong signals that MSD can work for youth and women, but gaps remain. Donors and implementers have parts to play in further exposing the gaps to achieving systemic, inclusive change and determining whether additional support is required, such as complementary programming designed to address the enabling environmental and social norms in which a market system operates.

CASE STUDY I

ÉLAN RDC: ADVANCING WOMEN'S ROLES IN AGRICULTURAL MARKET SYSTEMS



Photo Credit: ÉLAN RDC

Activity Highlights

Name: ÉLAN RDC
Lead Institution: Adam Smith International (ASI)
Country: Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)
Donor: DFID
Value of Award: \$65 million
Period of Performance: 2013–2018 (Phase I); 2019–2020 (Phase II), with possible 1-year extension

INTRODUCTION

This case study focuses on how ÉLAN RDC identifies non-traditional¹⁹ opportunities in agriculture and supporting markets, and leverages those opportunities to promote greater market inclusion of women at scale while also driving business growth. Informed by interviews with staff, it explores the analytical tools used to identify these opportunities, specific gender constraints ÉLAN RDC targets, and tactics they use to facilitate women's entry and expansion into new or upgraded roles. It also explores the measurement tools put in place to document results around women's empowerment and elicit valuable learning. Detailed in this case is ÉLAN RDC's vision and strategy for how they intend to facilitate changes in women's roles through the use of a role-change framework, and complementary and aligned monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) processes that measure results, help tweak approaches, and generate learning around what is and is not working.

¹⁹ *Traditional and non-traditional* are terms the research team introduced. They classify distinct types of opportunities afforded to males and females according to predominant gender and social norms. What is classified as a *traditional* or *non-traditional* role or opportunity varies across contexts, because gender and social norms differ greatly across geographies and environments. Traditional opportunities refer to sectors or roles where there is a large, or majority, share of women employed or participating; they are generally deemed "acceptable" or "appropriate" for women to perform as determined by prevailing gender and social norms. Non-traditional sectors are defined by the U.S. Department of Labor as sectors where 25 percent or less of those employed across the field are women. In this case study, non-traditional opportunities are defined as both (1) atypical gender roles in traditional sectors and/or the household, based on the intervention, and (2) any role in a non-traditional sector.

This case explores a core **learning question**: What formative analysis tools were used to identify non-traditional market opportunities, and how were these opportunities leveraged to promote greater market inclusion of women?

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Focus on both the terms and nature of women's participation**, and the benefits derived from it, to facilitate more meaningful changes to women's positions within the market system. Clear and aligned expectations from donors are critical to achieving desired outcomes beyond number of women who participate in market systems development (MSD) Activities or interventions.
2. **Use accessible tools and provide staff capacity-development opportunities** to help teams operationalize gender and women's economic empowerment (WEE) strategies in MSD Activities. In ÉLAN RDC, a role-change framework gives staff a vision of where and how changes can happen, as well as a sector-specific understanding of role changes particular partnerships and interventions target.
3. **Ensure staff buy-in and ownership of a gender strategy**, because this is critical to getting partners to buy into inclusion as a business concept.
4. **Provide a clear value proposition or business case** to garner interest from private-sector partners to engage in concepts around gender.
5. **Consistently and strategically use data** to prove and improve the business case for upgrading women's roles in market systems, and enhance an Activity's performance and impact.

ABOUT THE ACTIVITY

ÉLAN RDC is an MSD Activity that aims to reduce poverty in four geographical regions in the DRC by increasing the incomes of more than 1 million poor smallholder producers, entrepreneurs, and consumers by the end of 2020. The Activity does this by tackling the root causes of market failures and constraints, in partnership with more than 150 private-sector actors in finance, energy, transport, and agriculture,²⁰ through more than 100 interventions that offer technical advice, mobilize funds, and encourage networks to change their business practices. Cross-cutting sectors include Markets in Crisis, Business Development Services (or BDS), Business Enabling Environment, and WEE. At the end of 2019, ÉLAN RDC benefited more than 855,000 Congolese (31 percent women) through net positive income change (32 pounds, or approximately \$40, per person per annum on average) and has seen changes in business practices benefiting over 1,306,000 Congolese (30.5 percent women).

CONTEXT

Women in the DRC experience high rates of poverty, insufficient access to basic services including education and healthcare, restricted access to and/or control over economic assets, and limited influence over decision making at all levels. Harmful practices such as child, early, and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, domestic and intimate partner violence, and marital rape are widespread, and deep-rooted cultural norms and practices have hindered progress on gender equality. Women work

²⁰ Transport was only included in Phase I. Agricultural commodities consist of coffee, cacao, maize, and rice.

primarily in the informal sector, in low-skill, low-wage roles with limited potential for upward mobility. Additionally, women tend to take on multiple roles in the DRC—they function as principal income providers within a household, and also take on unpaid and “invisible” duties, such as caring for children and domestic tasks. This results in women’s triple burden and time poverty. While women are essential to the labor force in the DRC, they are also highly marginalized within it—participation does not necessarily mean that women derive benefit from their work.²¹

From 2013 to mid-2019, ÉLAN RDC has heightened their focus on integrating WEE into their market systems programming. For the first 2 years of implementation, ÉLAN RDC centered on devising approaches necessary to obtain the ambitious goal of reaching 1.7 million people,²² half of whom should be women. This target prompted discussion with the Activity team about whether focusing simply on participation would be enough, given what they knew about women’s constraints to realizing full benefits of their labor. In 2015, in dialogue with the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Activity committed to revising their gender strategy and focusing on both the terms and nature of women’s participation. Starting in 2016, ÉLAN RDC began piloting a role-change framework that sought to promote WEE through six role changes as a vehicle for greater gender equality. These role changes were an attempt to apply traditional WEE domains to sector-specific opportunities that relate to women’s advancement into upgraded roles or functions. Now, in its second phase of implementation, ÉLAN RDC 1.2 has deepened its focus on fewer interventions in a smaller geographic area, with an emphasis on drawing in market actors to promote more systemic change. They continue to use the role-change framework to amplify their WEE work, including getting greater market actors’ buy-in and ownership. ÉLAN RDC 1.2 has also expanded their gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) work to include disability.

STRATEGY AND LEARNING

ANALYZING SECTORS AND IDENTIFYING MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

In the inception phase of the project in 2013, ÉLAN RDC carried out rigorous analyses of every economic sector in the country, and developed criteria for shortlisting the sectors they would work in. A component of the sector selection criteria was the extent to which the sector would generate opportunities for female participation, including looking at sectors where women were already participating and where upgrades would facilitate greater entry and expansion of women’s roles. Throughout the inception phase, DFID provided more clarity on their gender expectations, including a desire to reach 50 percent of men and 50 percent of women in Activity beneficiaries. This information strongly informed sector selection. Activity staff noted that, without that direction from the donor, the initial sector selection likely would have moved toward more economically attractive sectors, which tend to be dominated by men. While competitiveness was still a factor for ÉLAN RDC’s sector selection, it was not the only one, giving equal weight to potential for economic inclusion.

It’s very hard to go back and try to bring in sectors that have more representation and opportunities for women, and so if your starting point is a bunch of sectors that

²¹ More information available at :

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bc4882465019f632b2f8653/t/5ca615109140b74b435d77e0/1554388254679/ELAN+WEE+Learning+Series+Case+Study+I+FINAL.pdf>

²² The target was subsequently scaled back in discussions with the donor.

are dominated by men, the window, the room for maneuverability is already weakened. – ÉLAN RDC staff

ÉLAN RDC also conducted political economy analysis (PEA) and gender analysis at the regional levels, which were tied to the selected sectors. Sector- and context-specific constraints and opportunities for female participation were used to inform sector strategies. Staff noted that while insights from these analyses were valuable, they were not always fully integrated in Activity-level strategy due to pressure to move interventions forward upon sector selection, not fully allowing time for the gendered insights to be well integrated. Furthermore, focusing on reaching 1.7 million people, half of whom had to be women, influenced how the analysis was structured—it looked primarily at sectors with high female participation or opportunities for female participation. The analysis focused on where the numbers were and what it would take to reach 850,000 women. Staff felt that the analysis lacked an assessment of the social norms that affected roles and responsibilities of women and men, which would be critical in later stages to fully understand how to influence movement around role change within these sectors.

Now, in the second phase, ÉLAN RDC 1.2, DFID defined sectors in the solicitation and the Activity team validated them during the inception phase, which included looking at expanded opportunities for women.

Learning from Formative Research Processes: How to Gather the Right Information at the Right Time to Build Informed Strategies Activity Staff Can Operationalize

At the beginning of the project, ÉLAN RDC conducted preliminary research into male and female roles, but it lacked the depth of insight necessary to understand how these role change processes come about, what they consist of, where they align with market-based incentives, and how they need to be contextualized for different populations. While the Activity conducted further research to understand these dynamics, the pressure to move ahead with interventions, coupled with low GESI capacity of staff, made it difficult to integrate insights from the PEA and gender analyses into the intervention design, and partner engagement strategies and approaches. This resulted in WEE efforts that were focused in a few select sectors and led by the GESI advisor, rather than diffused across the Activity with leadership and ownership from all Activity staff. Fuller analysis at the beginning would have allowed the team to dig deeper into gender constraints and opportunities, providing more nuanced understanding of the different market segments and ways to better advise businesses to reach women. Furthermore, having Activity staff understand how and why to use these data would have equipped them with necessary information to move approaches forward and set the tone for the Activity's WEE efforts. (See [Annex 2](#) in Youth, Women and Market Systems Development in Agriculture and Supporting Markets Landscape Analysis and Case Studies Report for ÉLAN RDC GESI Strategy, Guidance and Tools, and MEL Resources.)

LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S ROLE CHANGES

To help Activity staff and the donor better understand and operationalize WEE work within the Activity, ÉLAN RDC devised a role-change framework (see [Exhibit 15](#) below) that consists of six role changes specific to the DRC context and based on traditional WEE domains. These role changes apply to different market systems, span both supply and demand, and allow for spillover between economic, household, and community spheres. ÉLAN RDC believes this is a significant departure from many MSD programs because it goes beyond women's participation and incremental income increases toward more meaningful changes to women's positions within market systems, and defines gendered results as: a woman's role having been upgraded or expanded to derive more benefits. Under this model, a woman's role is considered to have progressed when as a result of an intervention, she experiences one or more of the following six changes over a sustained period:

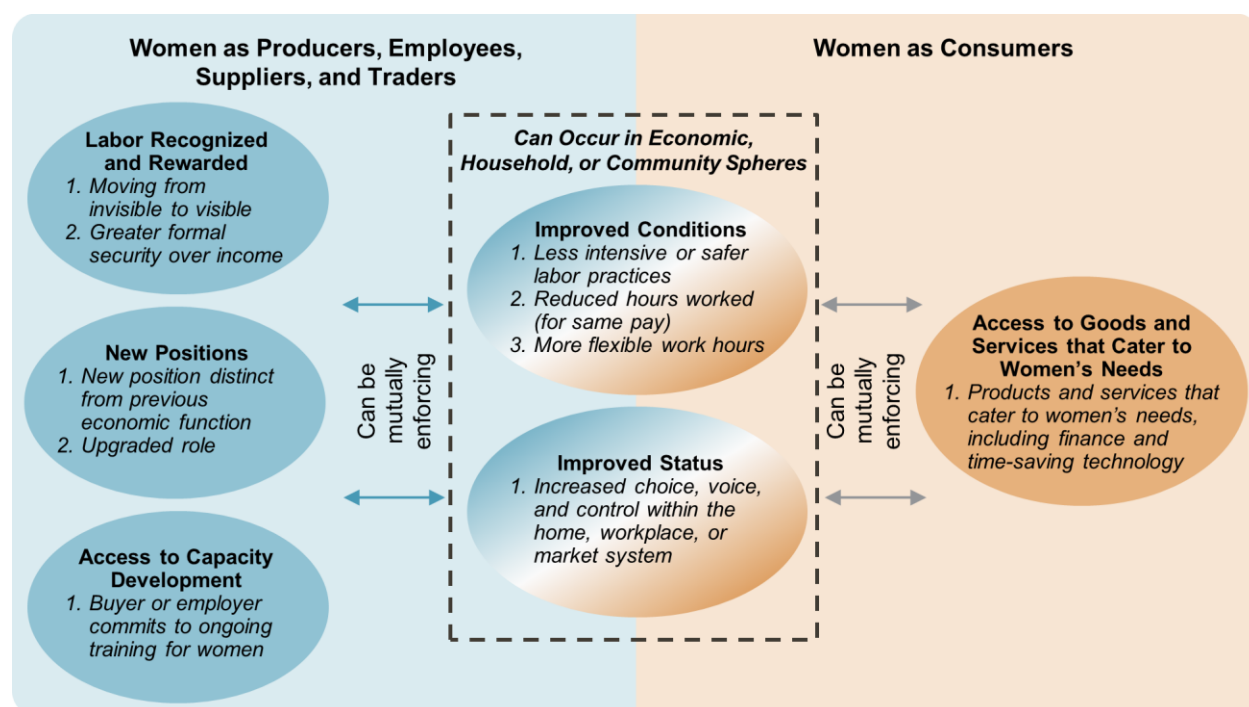
- Women's labor recognized and rewarded
- New position acquired or role upgraded
- Access to capacity development
- Improved working conditions
- Improved status
- Access to goods and services catering to women's needs

These role changes vary by intervention (e.g., consumer- vs. producer-focused) as shown in Exhibit 15.

How the Role-Change Framework Can Be an Effective Strategy and Communication Tool

- Communicates to Activity staff where there are opportunities to improve women's positions in market systems in language that resonates with what they know and connect with.
- Engages Activity staff in dialogue around WEE, overcoming biases that lead to reluctance of Activity staff to buy into WEE, and focuses on where role changes make commercial sense.
- Depicts where women currently participate and a vision of role change to show a whole pathway of opportunities that can be generated if an Activity can shift gender norms, align approaches with market-based incentives, and convincingly make the case to market actors.
- Demonstrates to the donor how the Activity goes beyond merely counting women to shifting women's roles within the market spaces where the Activity operates.

Exhibit 15: Descriptions of the six role change types



To operationalize this framework, Activity staff develop a *role-change sector sheet* for each of the sectors ÉLAN RDC operates in. The sheet includes descriptions of women's current roles in the sector, a vision of how women's roles will change as a result of ÉLAN RDC's engagement, whether it is a targeted or desired outcome, and suggested indicators and guidance on how they can be measured. Exhibit 16 offers an example excerpt²³ from the coffee and cocoa role-change sector sheet Activity staff filled out.

Exhibit 16: Excerpt from women's role change sector sheet – coffee and cocoa

Gender Constraints: While women are present and active in the coffee and cocoa sectors, both are considered “male crops,” with men perceived as “genuine farmers” and women as “helpers” engaged as unpaid labor. This is largely due to customary law around land tenure—men own land and women work it, and entrenched gender norms where men are income-earners. Where women are active, they are producers and processors, and are absent from trading—the point at which information and remuneration are exchanged.					
	Current Roles	Vision for Role Change	Targeted/ Desired	Suggested Indicator	Measurement
New position	Women are rarely recruited as lead farmers or agricultural instructors, and are absent from leadership positions within cooperative structures. Women's participation in higher value roles—	Women increasingly take on leadership positions at farm level (e.g., as lead farmers and agricultural instructors) and at the cooperative level (e.g., as cooperative board members).	Targeted	# of women with new positions: Women lead farmers and female agricultural instructors	Baseline established through partner key informant interviews and retrospective data

²³ This role change sector sheet is from phase one of ÉLAN RDC. Changes have been made to streamline the role change sheet in phase two of the Activity.

Gender Constraints: While women are present and active in the coffee and cocoa sectors, both are considered “male crops,” with men perceived as “genuine farmers” and women as “helpers” engaged as unpaid labor. This is largely due to customary law around land tenure—men own land and women work it, and entrenched gender norms where men are income-earners. Where women are active, they are producers and processors, and are absent from trading—the point at which information and remuneration are exchanged.

	Current Roles	Vision for Role Change	Targeted/ Desired	Suggested Indicator	Measurement
	cupping and laboratory-based roles in coffee, and trading and packaging roles in cocoa—is minimal; however, these are roles women aspire to.			Women are on cooperative boards	Annual survey data
Labor Recognized and Rewarded	Given the cooperative-based organizing structure for coffee and cocoa, women do not have employment contracts, and cooperative membership tends to be organized by smallholding and in their husbands’ names. Women typically work as unpaid laborers on their “husband’s farm” with few to no rights, and husbands control decisions around income. Female coffee producers have little leverage in negotiating better pricing.	Women either previously focused on subsistence activities or already engaged in coffee/cocoa in an invisible capacity have been able to enter/ become visible in the sector and are recognized as genuine farmers, through direct membership in cooperatives. As registered cooperative members, women increasingly sell their own product and receive a direct income.	Targeted	# of women whose labor is rewarded: Female members directly selling crops to cooperatives and/or other buyers	Baseline established through partner key informant interviews and retrospective data Annual survey data

Most of the role changes identified in the framework are those that are **feasible within the business case**—there is clear alignment between impact for women and incentive-driven, commercial models. Examples of inclusive business models demonstrated through ÉLAN RDC are presented in [Exhibit 17](#).²⁴

²⁴ See ÉLAN RDC’s brief on Promoting Gender-Responsive Business Models in DRC at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bc4882465019f632b2f8653/t/5ca61698e2c4832b7065ea12/1554388643835/ELAN+RDC+WEE+Lessons+Learnt_Final_digital1.pdf

Exhibit 17: Inclusive business models that demonstrate alignment between impact for women and private-sector incentives

SECTOR	MODEL	PRIVATE SECTOR INCENTIVE(S)	WEE IMPACT(S)	ROLE CHANGE
Access to Finance 	Rural agency banking model	Rural agency banking leads to gains for financial service providers by capturing an underserved consumer segment (low-income women), including higher loan repayment and savings rates. Expanded number of female agents are more profitable than men and help reach broader female consumer base.	Women have increased access to formal banking services, which provide greater opportunity to save, borrow, and have a bankable history—a prerequisite for accessing larger forms of finance. Women take greater control over their own income, spending, and saving.	Improved access to goods and services that cater to women's needs, new position (female agents), and improved status, including decision making over income and household finances
Maize 	Gender-responsive contract farming model	Gender-responsive contract farming leads to increases in quality and productivity, with female contract farmers having demonstrated equal or greater productivity levels, and a reduction in side-selling.	More women are recruited as contract signatories, given concessionary land for production and/or granted land by their husbands (55 percent), earn more income, have an increased influence over its use, and demonstrate greater economic resilience.	Labor is recognized and rewarded, improved working conditions, and improved status, including decision-making power
Coffee 	Gender-impact product line model	Female product line (<i>café femme</i>) drives up quantity and quality that lead to increased revenue and income for members, secures high-value contracts between cooperative and end markets, taps into growing and lucrative “social impact” product market, and accesses new buyers and exporters.	Women enter a new, high-value sector, increasing value capture. Women increase their income and have greater influence over how it is used. Women take on leadership roles and men grant plots to their wives, registered in their name.	New position, labor is recognized and rewarded, improved working conditions, access to capacity development, and status

To further describe how these WEE impacts were achieved using market-driven approaches, the gender-impact product line called *café femme* was developed through a partnership with Muungano, a coffee cooperative based in South Kivu, and TWIN, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) focused on strengthening producer organizations and helping them foster long-term trading relationships in the DRC. This partnership aimed to pilot an inclusive business model, whereby female-produced coffee is quality-controlled, exported, marketed, and sold to Western markets willing to pay a premium. While a third of Muungano's members were women, they had limited awareness of the commercial value in “social impact” end markets and the economic gains that could be realized by improving conditions of women's participation. Using a range of market facilitation tactics, ÉLAN RDC and TWIN supported Muungano to improve coffee quality, develop an internal control system that enabled full traceability of coffee cherries to female farmers, and generate and share a convincing business case for the *café femme* model. ÉLAN RDC also helped to build capacity of local institutions, such as TWIN, to cultivate female leadership and address harmful gender norms. The pilot showed that by specifically investing in and targeting improvements in women's production practices, Muungano could increase coffee cherry quality by 23 percent, selling approximately 42,300 pounds of women-produced coffee for a 120 cent/pound premium versus non-specialized coffee. The benefits for women were also substantial,

including increases in women's incomes by nearly \$70 per annum, 55 percent of married women in the cooperative receiving plots from their husbands, nearly 30 percent of cooperative leadership positions being occupied by women, and 70 percent of Muungano's female members now involved in trading.

While the *café femme* model has been highly successful under ÉLAN RDC, ongoing challenges that limit the scalability of the model include: (1) limited absorptive capacity of female-produced coffee, because it represents a relatively small market share; (2) high upfront investment costs involved in setting up a traceability system and upgrading coffee quality; and (3) potential risks in focusing on an exclusively female product, including exacerbating women's time poverty and social and inter-household tensions. Under ÉLAN RDC 1.2, the Activity will look for ways to share the evidence on the commercial viability of the *café femme* model with market actors across sectors.

MEASURING, EVALUATING, AND LEARNING FROM WOMEN'S ROLE CHANGES

To measure targeted or desired outcomes in women's role changes, ÉLAN RDC incorporates log-frame indicators at the output and outcome levels, which align with the six role changes listed above. The Activity does this by developing *Intervention Guides*²⁵ that include gender-responsive results chains and relevant role change(s) the ÉLAN RDC sector lead and the partner (i.e., market actor) jointly identify and discuss. Working closely with the MEL manager, the sector lead also ensures that in discussions with partners, the appropriate measurements for that targeted role change(s) are developed, and that targeted role change(s) and reporting requirements are integrated in the partnership agreement. The MEL manager pointed to the necessity of integrating these role changes in the results chains because “that’s what is ultimately leading the measurement plan and all the measurement activities,” ensuring the Activity remains committed to achieving outcomes around it.

ÉLAN RDC uses a series of qualitative and quantitative SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) proxy indicators to measure role changes at different moments in time and better estimate the number of women expanding or upgrading their roles. These types of indicators are especially important in dynamic and complex market systems, whereby women's roles can progress and regress in a non-linear fashion over time. Indicator data are collected from a variety of sources to make sure the full picture of women's role changes is captured by validating outcomes and soliciting insights from sector leads, partners, beneficiaries, association representatives, and so on. Data are collected through partner reporting, beneficiary and partner interviews, market actor scoping, and annual surveys on women's role change(s), which include questions on what women do, how they use their time, and decision-making power over income and household budgets. This information is analyzed and reported out to the donor, staff, partners, and market actors, when relevant, through analytical reports, *Intervention Guides*, partner reports, newsletters, and success stories. Three (3) years after the introduction of the framework, ÉLAN RDC facilitated upgraded roles for nearly 55,000 women.

Additionally, the ÉLAN RDC Monitoring and Results Measurement team undertakes ongoing and ad-hoc observational research to capture and understand unintended consequences, and/or how changes were facilitated and why. An example of this are the three qualitative learning studies prioritized under Phase I of ÉLAN RDC to develop a richer understanding of gender-differentiated impact, individual pathways to change, and intended and unintended outcomes of women's engagement in these business models. This research elicited unintended outcomes around the potential of these models to exacerbate women's

²⁵ *Intervention Guides* are detailed resources developed and refined by and for Activity staff to guide interventions. They include the intervention results chain, the measurement plan, and results, among other things.

time poverty (and potential displacement of care and domestic work on children) and ongoing challenges related to deeply entrenched norms that limit WEE despite the fact that they were able to make important advances in shifting the normative environment through these pilots. Information gathered through these studies was compiled into a *Women's Economic Empowerment Learning Series*, intended to help ÉLAN RDC improve its own programming for women and build the evidence base around “what works” to economically empower women in the DRC using market-driven approaches.

DEVELOPING GREATER STAFF BUY-IN, OWNERSHIP, AND CAPACITIES TO OPERATIONALIZE GENDER STRATEGY IN ÉLAN RDC

A critical component of operationalizing the role-change framework, and the WEE strategy more generally, is building staff capacity and ownership. The GESI lead for ÉLAN RDC noted that MSD interventions place a lot of emphasis on partners, and building their interest and capacity to change attitudes and practices; while this is important, it needs to be preceded by staff ownership and capacity development to fully operationalize and realize the benefits of these changes.

I know everyone wants to see this transformation at the partner level, but I honestly feel like in most cases, we put the cart before the horse, where we overly focus on what's happening at the partner level without recognizing that the advocate for this, the mouthpiece for this change, isn't yet really comfortable in advocating for it fully.
– ÉLAN RDC staff

Tactics to build gender capacity, ownership, and buy-in of role-change framework among Activity staff in ÉLAN RDC consisted of:

- Establishing GESI champions in each region²⁶ to provide advice and support to intervention leads (e.g., assess and evaluate the activities to determine whether they meet criteria and understanding of gender)
- Helping sector teams understand that WEE/gender is not above other priorities, but is core to any kind of value proposition given to partners
- Making sector teams responsible for gender integration in partnerships, leading to greater ownership over WEE work among staff and more meaningful integration
- Ongoing staff training on women's role changes; early introduction of role-change concepts and strategy so that staff can align, define what can be done, and determine roles and responsibilities
- Coaching programs with senior managers
- Monthly newsletter featuring role changes to reinforce the concepts and make them practical
- Guidance note to staff around what role changes might look like in the context of COVID-19²⁷
- Pause-and-reflect sessions focusing exclusively on GESI and role changes within specific sectors

²⁶ This approach was employed under Phase I of ÉLAN RDC. Under Phase II (or ÉLAN RDC I.2), the Activity has not used this approach, because the geographic scope and Activity team are much smaller.

²⁷ For more information see: <https://www.elanrdc.com/latest-news/2020/5/5/measuring-progression-in-womens-roles-special-covid-19>

- Conducting stock-taking exercises to elicit areas for further staff capacity development on gender and areas where greater ownership and buy-in are needed

As a result of the diverse tactics ÉLAN RDC employed to build staff capacities and ownership of gender work, the GESI team lead noted that their role changed from convincing staff of the need for gender integration in their work to equipping them with the tools and resources they needed to operationalize the work.

With ÉLAN, that there's [sic] more people on the team that are genuinely bought into the concept and are excited about it, and so my role shifts to, instead of pleading with them for the case, it's now shifted towards, "Oh, here's resources... [sic] Let me just arm you with more guidance and how to do it well," which is an exciting role to play. – ÉLAN RDC staff

CONCLUSIONS

ÉLAN RDC's role-change framework was effective in articulating a vision of women's empowerment in market systems that focused on upgraded and expanded roles for women beyond where they currently participated and incremental increases in income. The visualization below shows key points at which ÉLAN RDC prioritized, analyzed, and responded to constraints that limited both market actors and women, as well as opportunities to progress women's roles in agricultural sectors.

ÉLAN RDC: Opportunities to Progress Women's Roles in the Coffee and Maize Sectors

OPPORTUNITIES TO PROGRESS WOMEN'S ROLES | Coffee Sector

In 2014, ÉLAN RDC partnered with coffee cooperative Muungano and NGO TWIN to **pilot sales to ethical trade markets from female producers**. Proven successful, at least two other neighboring cooperatives adopted the business model.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT CONSTRAINTS	MARKET CONSTRAINTS	INTERVENTION	RESULTS	ROLE CHANGES*
PRODUCTION / POST HARVEST / PROCESSING  Not registered as cooperative members; land in husbands' name  Rarely recruited in 'lead farmer' role; absent in coop leadership  Viewed as "helpers", limited access to extension  Poor working conditions; no safety equipment	<i>Commercial performance of the coffee cooperative is constrained by quality issues and low-value contracts, with limited knowledge of how to secure contracts in high-value export markets.</i>	• Engaging men and women in shifting gender dynamics	• 55% of men granted plots to their wives, registered in their names	 Improved Status
		• Leadership training • Cultivating confidence	• 2 of 7 coop board positions, and 30% of coop leadership, are women	 New Positions
		• Demonstration plots and training	• Increase in cherry quality • Women seen as genuine, productive farmers	 Access to Capacity Development
		• Access to labor saving technologies • Safety training (e.g. applying pesticides)	• Less time needed for labor-intensive tasks	 Improved Conditions
MARKETING / SALES  Concentrated in low value-capture roles  Not involved in marketing		• Traceability to female farmers	• 70% of female coop members involved in trading • Increase in and control over women's incomes	 Labor Recognized & Rewarded
		• Marketing women-only produced coffee	• Muungano successfully sold women-produced coffee at a premium	

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

 **Win-Win Opportunity:** By targeting women and improving roles in production, the private sector increases coffee quantity and quality; diversifies products; increases revenues; and improves supply chain reliability. Women access lucrative end markets, improving incomes and status.

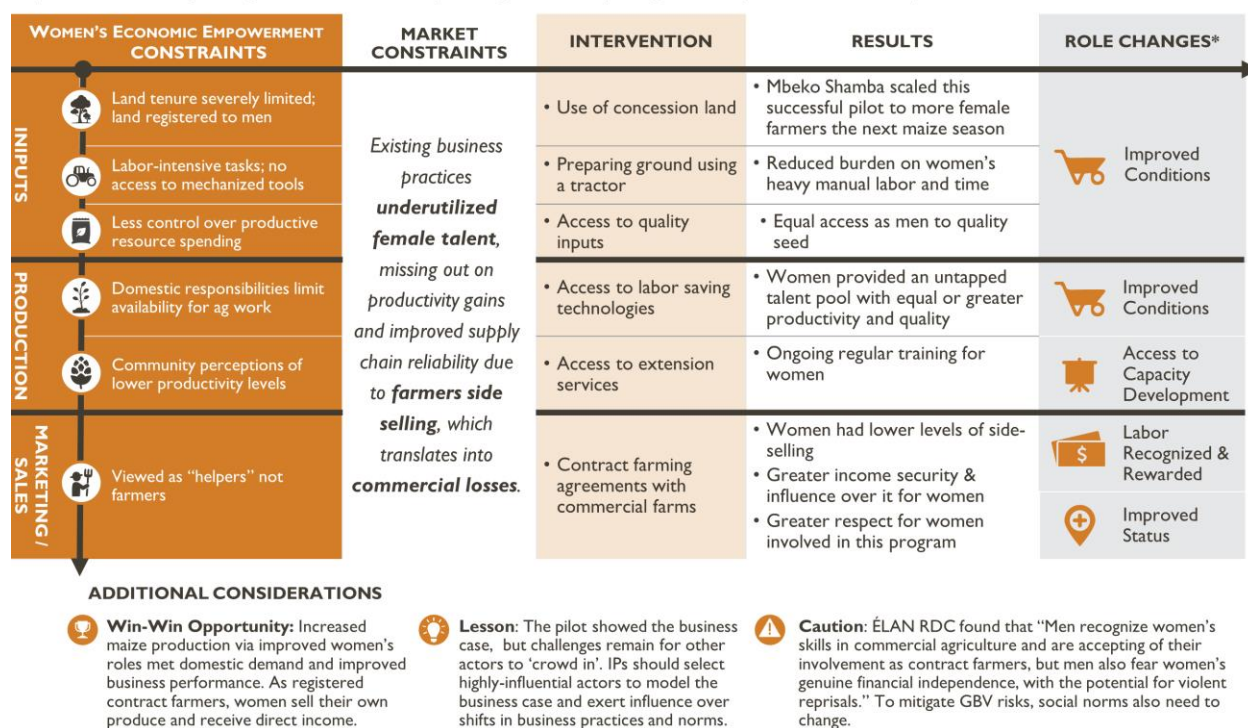
 **Lesson:** (1) The pilot showed the business case but requires up-front investment. Without donor support, cooperatives may not have the \$\$ or risk appetite to pilot/adopt the model. (2) Their target segment (high-end, ethical trade for women-only produced coffee) has limited absorptive capacity – so need to test, expand market channels.

 **Caution:** ÉLAN RDC found risks in stirring up social tensions and exacerbating women's time poverty by privileging women's labor. In the future, consider improving women's engagement through more mainstream, non-segregated models, complemented by work to shift social norms that improve women's labor burdens.

* Role Change categories based on ÉLAN RDC's Role Change Framework

OPPORTUNITIES TO PROGRESS WOMEN'S ROLES | Commercial Maize

In 2014, ÉLAN RDC partnered with commercial farm Mbeko Shamba in Haut-Katanga to pilot an out-grower scheme that targeted women. This **gender-responsive contract farming model** demonstrated promising results in improving the roles of women AND maize production.



* Role Change categories based on ÉLAN RDC's Role Change Framework

As the visualization shows, market analyses and formative research helped contextualize these role changes, including the targeted constraints and pathways by which changes came about. This information then fed directly into the design of sector-specific strategies and role-change sheets that clearly articulated current roles and constraints, vision for change, and measurements to monitor and evaluate progression to those changes. While there were some highly successful examples of employing MSD tactics to stimulate changes in women's roles, including making a convincing business case, this has not been fully operationalized across ÉLAN RDC's broader portfolio, with many citing the private sector not being convinced of the business case and not always having the data necessary to convince them. Activity staff are working on tackling this under ÉLAN RDC I.2. Measurements on women's role changes and associated MEL tools are critical to understanding not just the extent to which women participate, but also what the terms of that participation look like according to the six role changes.

One unanticipated learning from this case study is the degree to which internal capacity-building efforts and greater ownership and buy-in among staff are critical to fully operationalize strategies focused on WEE. Many ÉLAN RDC staff interviewed for this case study felt that the capacity development efforts underpinned all of the GESI work, with one staff member indicating it was paramount to:

Get your house in order. You need to have the full power of your technical and program management teams behind the integration of gender considerations in everything you do, both represented in your project makeup, but as well as [sic] in the technical and operational aspects of the project, your tool design, your systems,

and at the end of the day, the data that your team members are presenting to business partners. – ÉLAN RDC staff

While ÉLAN RDC has had great success in identifying sector-specific market opportunities where women's roles can be upgraded or expanded, there are still challenges to fully realizing robust gender results, including:

- Business partners continue to have low interest in engaging in concepts around gender without a convincing business case or value proposition given high upfront investment costs, perceived riskiness of investing in inclusive business models, and deeply entrenched gender and social norms. Examples in the maize, coffee, and financial services sectors detailed in this report show there are opportunities to generate localized commercial cases for targeting women, and they are highly influential in getting market actors to adopt more inclusive business models and practices. More evidence is needed on to what extent these commercial cases made with discrete Activity-supported actors influence other market actors to adopt similar models (described more in the point below).
- Data, figures, and clear results speaking to the benefit of women's upgraded roles are needed to influence attitudes and behaviors of market actors (i.e., businesses), program participants (i.e., male and female farmers), and Activity staff. Ongoing monitoring, reflection, and learning can help sustain momentum and move away from any "check-the-box" attitudes. This information needs to be widely disseminated and discussed with partners to generate curiosity and influence market actors to adopt more inclusive business models. Working directly through Activity staff to communicate this message is one way to do this, but there are likely also opportunities to build greater champions within the network of partners ÉLAN RDC works with to be mouthpieces for advantages of more inclusive business models.

I feel like for ÉLAN as a program, it's rather understood how it[s] [role changes] can be valuable. At the partner level, often, it remains a tick-the-box exercise. Also, if they are not told to do so, they will not do because basically, they don't see the value in it. – ÉLAN RDC staff

CONTACT

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CASE STUDY 2

FACILITATION INTENSITY IN YOUTH MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA

INTRODUCTION

A market systems development (MSD) approach is increasingly used to develop market-driven employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for specific populations, including young women and men. A core feature of an MSD approach is **facilitation**²⁸—working through market actors to stimulate more sustainable change, minimizing an Activity's direct role. Activities employ facilitation with **varied levels of intensity**, ranging from **low** (no or minimum subsidy, low levels of project direction) to **high** (heavy subsidies and project direction).

Several important components of youth development—life and business skills, knowledge and competencies, healthy family and community relationships, and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) awareness—may be targeted in youth-inclusive MSD. Addressing this wider range of youth development needs is critical to the achievement of sustainable decent livelihoods, because youth need support to take advantage of the opportunities generated. However, facilitation relies on leveraging market-based incentives for change, and this can challenge the range of youth development components an MSD approach can address. For example, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Feed the Future Youth Leadership for Agriculture (YLA) and Mastercard Foundation's Driving Youth-led New Agribusiness and Microenterprise in Northern Uganda (DYNAMIC) both facilitate youth-inclusive MSD, but address the challenges from different angles, which are analyzed below.

Activity Highlights

Name: YLA
Lead Institution: Chemonics International
Country: Uganda
Donor: USAID
Value of Award: \$21.5 million
Period of Performance: 2015–2020

Name: DYNAMIC
Lead Institution: GOAL
Country: Uganda
Donor: Mastercard Foundation
Value of Award: \$21.5 million
Period of Performance: 2015–2021

Through the experience of these two Uganda-based programs, this case study explores a core **learning question: How does facilitation intensity affect the capacity of an MSD approach to address critical components of young women's and men's development?**

²⁸ For more on facilitation, see <https://www.marketlinks.org/good-practice-center/value-chain-wiki/facilitation> and <https://beamexchange.org/guidance/vision/facilitation-role/>.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Employers, buyers, and financial service providers can increase their understanding and willingness to support youth and some of their needs, such as parental outreach, services closer to home, and safety considerations. However, it takes time for implementers to develop the business case and for market actors to understand and be open to it and then engage youth independently, regularly, and without facilitation.
2. Donors prescribe youth development components, such as life skills, SRH, and parental and community engagement in solicitations. These components may be challenging to facilitate through MSD approaches, because appropriate market actors may not exist or Activities may not be able to incentivize them to respond to these gaps. Therefore, to address some youth components, implementers may have to resort to intensive facilitation approaches, such as heavy subsidies. A higher intensity facilitation approach allowed DYNAMIC to more reliably address a wide range of key youth development needs. At the time of writing, the sustainability of DYNAMIC's market-facilitated youth mobilization and empowerment approach, delivered through peer educators, is unknown.
3. When Activities provide youth with substantial input subsidies, adult parents and other community members can react negatively toward the companies providing the products. These are the same types of tensions that exist in traditional development aid projects.
4. Without a commitment to track the dimensions of change in female youth's opportunities (norms change, role change, and other non-monetary indicators of well-being) through formative gender analyses and comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) tools, outcomes for women remain either anecdotal or too high-level to glean specificity. This was the case regardless of the level and intensity of project interventions.
5. Neither MSD program was able to address youth SRH in a comprehensive manner. There remains a question as to whether the programs are suited to address SRH based on a range of factors: the limitations of facilitation, the ability to deliver blanket coverage given the range of entry points, the distraction from other core activities, and the inability to provide the service sustainably.
6. Younger youth (aged 10–17) are not well served using low-intensity facilitation. While it is possible to facilitate asset-building opportunities, these interventions are more akin to highly subsidized youth development or education programming.

ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES

Feed the Future YLA focuses on leveraging the private sector to unlock opportunities for Ugandan male and female youth aged 10–35 in agriculture-related fields to increase their incomes and build entrepreneurship, leadership, and workforce readiness. YLA strives to strengthen the capacity of selected workforce institutions and value chain actors to secure sustainability of innovative youth engagement approaches. By Activity end, YLA aims to reach 350,000 youth (of which 70 percent are women) with income and skills in agriculture.

DYNAMIC is a Mastercard Foundation-funded Activity strengthening key agricultural systems to create and sustain employment and self-employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged youth. The program focuses on tillage and improved inputs through agents, facilitates access to markets and financial services, and provides a wide range of training—from formal technical and vocational education and

training to financial literacy through peer educators. By Activity end, DYNAMIC will reach 110,000 out-of-school youth aged 15–24 (original target 125,000) who live in peri-urban and rural areas in northern Uganda.

THE CONTEXT

Uganda is home to the world’s second youngest population—75 percent of Ugandans are under 30 years old—with more than a million young people entering the job market each year ([World Bank 2019](#)). While the labor force expands exponentially and the economy has been growing at a steady 6-percent annual rate, job creation and labor productivity have not increased correspondingly (International Monetary Fund [[IMF](#)] 2019). As a result, 83.5 percent of the Ugandan population aged 15–29 work in informal jobs (10 percent higher for young women than men). Informal jobs are often insecure, poorly paid, and unsafe.

Women and youth are disproportionately represented in the informal economy and disadvantaged. The “youth bulge” will likely expand the informal economy as young people enter the labor market and young women struggle to benefit equally from work opportunities. Uganda has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy: 25 percent of girls aged between 15 and 19 years have had a baby or are pregnant at the time of the study ([World Bank 2016](#)). Pregnancy, motherhood, safety, home obligations, and harmful social norms limit women’s ability to take advantage of economic opportunities.

The agriculture sector is underperforming compared with the rest of Uganda’s economy and its growth has not kept up with the population expansion, representing ripe market opportunity (Overseas Development Institute [[ODI](#)] 2017). In this sector, Ugandans are underemployed and engaged in unstable or precarious work with poor incomes, particularly in subsistence agriculture or working for informal, low-productivity household enterprises. Modernizing rural economy requires the formalization of employment, decreased fertility rates, and increased educational attainment, among other challenging and costly reforms. With a high capacity to absorb workers and meet youth where they are, facilitating win–win opportunities for youth in the sector could contribute to this goal.

ACTIVITY STRATEGIES AND LEARNING

ACTIVITY 1: FEED THE FUTURE YLA

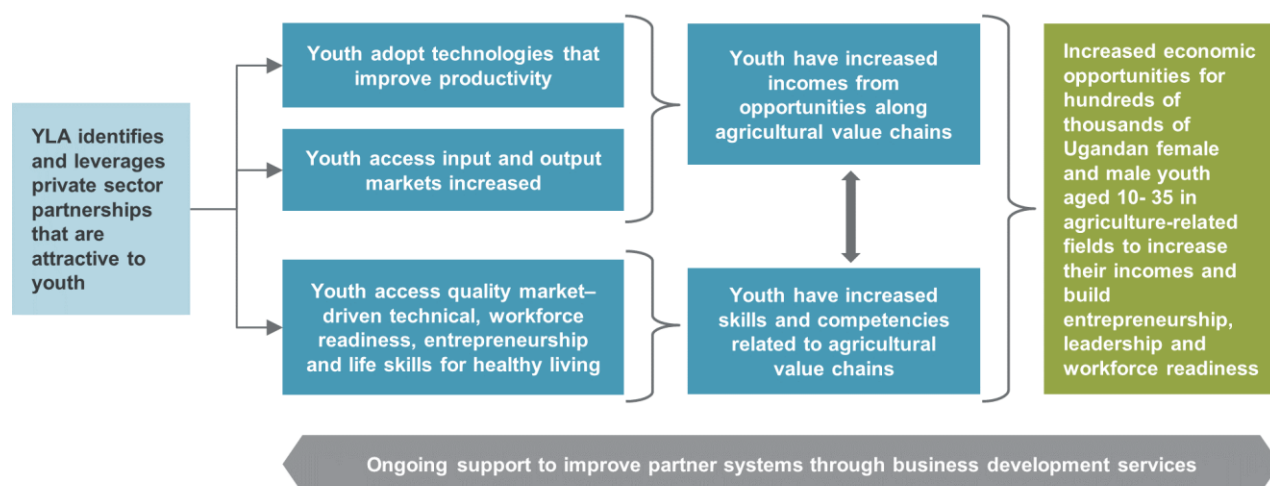


SOURCE: YLA

STRATEGY

YLA used a market-led approach to expand economic opportunities through increased incomes, skills, and competencies of a targeted 350,000 young men and women. The Activity provided business development support, investments, and incentives to encourage private-sector actors to provide youth with technical assistance, training, mentoring, and greater access to input and output markets. YLA defined youth as aged 10–35 years old and focused on a younger age cohort. Atypical for an MSD intervention, USAID required YLA to emphasize life skills for healthy living and reproductive health/family planning. In accordance with USAID’s *Youth Policy*, it was acknowledged that young women in particular are unable to gain skills necessary to earn sustainable income, often due to unplanned pregnancies, child care, and other responsibilities in the home. YLA’s process of change is represented in [Exhibit 18](#), underpinned by the support to partners through business development services.

Exhibit 18: YLA’s process of change



LEARNING

YLA embraced USAID's collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) approach,²⁹ which values pivots in response to ongoing learning. YLA's rapid learning cycle (mid-year strategy sessions and quarterly all-staff reflection events) focused on better understanding failures, constraints, and the ability of staff and interventions to address them through programmatic shifts. Key pivots included:

Partnership design: As an essential implementation vehicle for YLA, partnership design was an area where YLA made a critical pivot. YLA initially started partnership designs by looking at youth's needs and determining where partnerships could address them. Firms and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) brought partnership ideas to YLA that met contractual outcomes (such as training youth), rather than their own business objectives. However, because the incentives for these outcomes were ultimately prescriptive and project-driven, not partner-led and business-based, YLA worried they were not win-win interventions and were, therefore, unsustainable. To avoid this pitfall, YLA reengineered the design process to start with private-sector partners' needs: They worked with partners to identify their own business problems and opportunities, and then demonstrated how gender or youth are essential to the solution or opportunity (i.e., "the pitch") (See Equator Seeds Limited [ESL] text box below as an example). YLA calls this process **design in reverse**: it aims to facilitate business results first to strengthen the potential for youth engagement, sustainability, and value for money (through co-investment). To reach youth, YLA had to prioritize the critical question of improving the partners' business model to catalyze the growth that would, eventually, result in increased labor needs and market demand. The gender and youth analyses performed at the beginning of the Activity provided information that, at first, was too theoretical to market actors. When the time was ripe for market actors to engage in youth needs and constraints as they became more clearly linked to their business needs, the analysis was outdated or too general to be useful.

Learning from ESL: Evolving Pivots to Deepen Youth and Women's Inclusion

Before engagement with YLA, ESL procured seeds from contract farmers, large commercial farmers, and farming cooperatives or associations. Through an evolving YLA partnership, ESL gradually introduced a new procurement model and layered additional features that both addressed core business concerns and increased youth engagement, while also improving women's working conditions.

Procurement: To address the challenge of producing sufficient quality seed, ESL's leadership, with YLA's support, piloted a new procurement model that allowed them to more efficiently source seed from smallholder farmers who were not members of farmers associations or cooperatives, which allowed them to directly engage youth. YLA helped ESL generate a training curriculum for community-based facilitators (CBFs)—many of whom are female youth—in land preparation, crop management, and harvesting; CBFs then trained 6,500 youth seed growers and served as ESL aggregators. ESL saved time and money by working through CBFs who lived in the same villages as the seed growers.

Payment: The CBF model involved transporting large sums of cash to designated rural buying centers to pay producers: YLA supported ESL to convert to mobile money payment methods by providing a cost-assessment, then facilitating a relationship with MobiPay, which trained youth to use the payment platform. This platform improved issues in ESL's decentralized accounting system.

Marketing: As the CBF model grew, an opportunity existed for improved community sales through village-level marketing kiosks. In partnership with YLA, 300 women-operated input kiosks

²⁹ For more, see <https://usaidlearninglab.org/node/14633>.

were established with credit from ESL. Each of these kiosks employed an additional five women who worked on commission. ESL describes this model change as “revolutionary” for their last-mile distribution and for bringing extension services closer to farmers through kiosk operators.

Women’s working conditions: YLA identified early on that the conditions of women’s work in seed processing were poor. While YLA raised the issue, addressing it was not ESL’s priority, and it took ESL 4 years to conclude this was a business issue that if resolved, would bring benefits. Through an in-kind grant, YLA furnished and trained care assistants for a nursery, while ESL provided the space, labor, and materials for construction. The childcare allows women to focus on their job in safer conditions, and children to access stimulating early child development in a safe environment.

Ultimately, ESL has seen a strong business case emerge for youth to participate at different levels of the value chain: production, extension services delivery, input distribution, and market processes. This allows ESL to increase the production of quality and affordable certified seed, and expand the outreach and monitoring of seed producers.

Education: With in-school youth, YLA planned to accelerate skills by contributing to the public-school curricula while older youth, legally able to be employed at 18, could be more directly inserted into the labor pool. However, YLA was unable to secure permissions to work within the public-school system and ultimately, came to see that basic education was beyond their scope.

Age-based cohorts: Given that 10–35 years is a wide range, YLA originally planned to modify activities for different age cohorts. However, segmenting, engaging, and targeting youth presented a problem for YLA’s facilitation approach. Young men and women were in and out of school, taking care of children at home, or working on various economic activities that did not lead to obvious engagement entry points. Ultimately, younger youth (aged 10–15) were reached in extracurricular programs through NGO partners such as Aflatoun (financial literacy) and Faith Agro (school gardens); however, without tracer studies, the outcome is unclear.

Vocational Training Institutes (VTIs): VTIs are typically structured toward traditional skills in carpentry, sewing, and hair care, among others, which did not match the skills agricultural firms were looking for (e.g., accounting, warehouse management, and machinery repair). YLA recognized that market actors needed to invest in the skills relevant to the specific business needs that allow them to sustainably grow. Rather than invest in VTIs, they supported market actors to develop specialized training related to the core business model (accounting, quality inspection), which ultimately serve to provide youth with an occupational growth-oriented skillset.

Young women’s inclusion: Although YLA performed a gender analysis, they took the view that women (most of whom are “youth” in Uganda) need employment and can be trained to lead, and so, if YLA can unlock the opportunity through facilitation, young women will be engaged. There are examples demonstrating that this approach has yielded impressive role-change opportunities, such as through women’s tractor maintenance and driving training, and specialized employment (see video [Sing With Me Happily](#)). By their last year, YLA had reached hundreds of thousands of young women participants (just below 50 percent/157,000 of an ambitious target of 70 percent/245,000 women)—a scale within the bounds of a 5-year Activity that is considered a success by typical MSD program standards. Most often, they are in the 10–14 age bracket, participating in financial literacy or other skill-based interventions (28 percent), followed by the 30–35 years group who accessed employment and production opportunities (20 percent). As the scale of the YLA project was ambitious, it was limited in the data it could collect on gender

outcomes, beyond employment and income data. As such, the degree of inadvertent harm, hardship, or insecurity posed by improved livelihoods is poorly understood, because specialized studies to assess negative unintended consequences are currently not common practice in most agricultural development programs.

SRH: With co-funding provided by the USAID Bureau of Education, YLA committed to improved provision of *Life Skills for Healthy Living* through low-intensity facilitation: engaging a variety of partners (suppliers and buyers, business advisors, saving and credit cooperative societies [SACCOs], and NGOs) to integrate SRH training and/or messages within young farmer training. For example, in 2018, YLA partnered with an NGO called [Kulika](#) to train youth in good agronomic practices and promote SRH by strengthening life skills for healthy living. Kulika formalized memoranda of understanding with community health centers to provide access to comprehensive health services to its farmers, and worked with the centers to disseminate health information to farmers through training sessions on nutrition, family planning, proper child spacing, early pregnancy prevention, and testing and prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Targets were repeatedly missed due to the private sector-driven approach (18 percent of target reached in 2018; 21 percent in 2019). YLA observed that market players did not prioritize the activities because they drained time and resources, and fell short of addressing critical adolescent SRH needs. YLA acknowledges that the high birthrate has a disproportionate effect on young women's opportunities, yet concludes that a market-responsive program is not best placed to address this challenge. The USAID mission in Uganda is now exploring how a portfolio approach within a region (e.g., multiple programs with more intentional coordinating and layering) can respond to multifold needs and leverage partners' respective expertise.

YLA's theory of change evolved to rely entirely on strengthening the market system, so that market actors themselves could engage youth in ways that fit their current and/or future business needs. Youth represented 70 percent of the people residing in the areas of implementation, so their participation was ultimately dependent on the success of the business, rather than incentives to include them.

At the end of the day, if the business is successful, you can be sure that engaging youth at scale will happen – partner growth will trigger that. – Marcos Moreno, Former YLA Chief of Party

ACTIVITY II: DYNAMIC

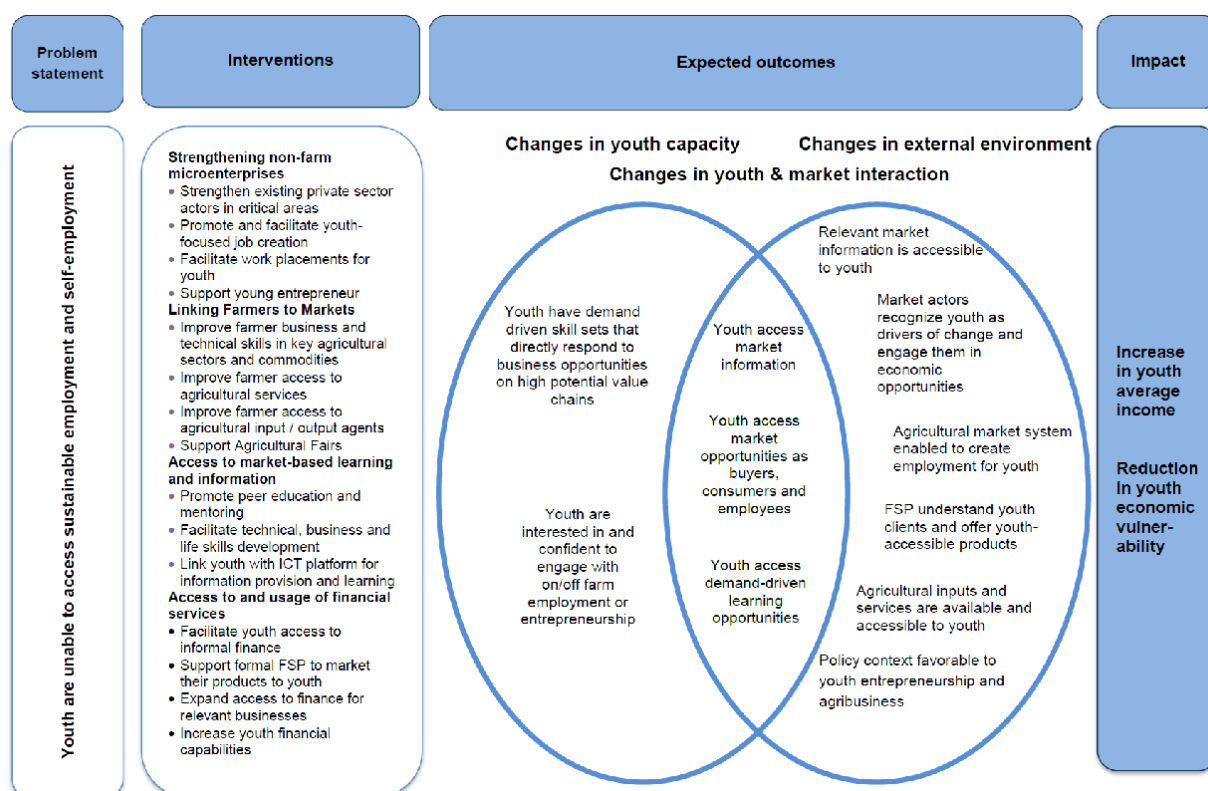


STRATEGY

DYNAMIC used a Making Markets Work for Youth (M4Y) approach, referred to by staff as a hybrid (MSD and development programming) approach that addresses both supply- and demand-side opportunities and barriers to youth engagement in agriculture and animal industry markets. In this context, youth engagement refers to the development of youth-inclusive businesses where private-sector actors leverage commercial incentives to provide important products, services, support, and market access to youth producers and consumers in their value chains. DYNAMIC was the first project in the Mastercard Foundation's portfolio to focus on facilitating MSD to engage youth in economic opportunities. They targeted youth aged 15–24, living on less than \$2/day, and out of school, unemployed, or underemployed and seeking quality employment or the opportunity to start their own businesses.

DYNAMIC had a 1-year design phase, during which results chains (including crop, animal, financial, and education markets) and youth analysis and engagement strategies were developed. DYNAMIC considered the growth potential of markets, and opportunities for youth with low upfront costs and near-term returns, so that youth could reinvest earnings and continue to engage in agribusiness.

Exhibit 19: DYNAMIC theory of change



DYNAMIC embraces a mix of facilitation via partnerships with the private sector. Skills training are facilitated through peer education (PE) model and vocational training institutions. Changes in youth capacity and the external environment in the ovals in Exhibit 19 illustrate the hybrid nature of the program. Overall, 60 to 70 percent of the Activity's budget (technical, in-kind, and financial) is allocated to building skills of youth, creating or expanding access to input/output market, and increasing access to financial services to youth through PEs, vocational training, private-sector partners, and financial institutions. Upfront investment in youth skills is meant to improve youth's ability to act as potential clients of stakeholders as producers and consumers.

LEARNING

DYNAMIC intervened in facilitating youth-led microenterprises and access to markets, training, and financial services. DYNAMIC developed a skills curriculum for youth and a cohort of youth educators and agents. They developed other curricula with education authorities and VTIs to strengthen agriculture-related subjects through public institutions and private education service providers, which are high-intensity activities. Using an adaptive management approach developed over time, the Activity has focused on improving partner engagement. A learning agenda exists for each pillar and is regularly visited to inform program improvements. Although there have been modest pivots, the original design is largely the same blueprint.

Key program elements and learning include:

The peer educator/agent model: Based on a youth analysis, DYNAMIC determined that the high rates of school dropout required a skills-based intervention. DYNAMIC believed that commercial partners could only provide training that served their specific commercial interests, so life skills, business skills,

and financial literacy were delivered through a PE model at scale. The concept was that PEs would mobilize youth and offer training for a fee, and facilitate youth engagement in shared-value market opportunities. PEs should reach 90 percent of out-of-school youth participants who are then put in groups of 30 youth aged 15–24 years. They are trained in four skill sets: life skills, financial literacy, village savings and loan associations (VSLA) methodology, and business skills. These are complemented by technical skills private-sector actors provide to both PEs and youth group members. At select stages, PEs and staff of DYNAMIC’s youth engagement team mobilize parents, spouses, and caregivers in the youth group training sessions. This process helps the team gain participation consent from the spouses and parents (required for youth below 18 years) and ensures youth are relieved of their daily chores and commitment.

Learning from this intervention showed that the skills youth learned were relevant and valued by the private sector (see box below). Some PEs were able to earn enough to support themselves in part or completely. Others had difficulty getting youth or market actors to pay them for their services, because market actors had some experience with NGOs providing such support at no cost.

Learning from TruTrade Africa: Upskilling Value-Add

TruTrade was set up to transform the way smallholder farmers access markets. They do this by pooling small-scale producers and placing them on their market connect platform. This offers farmers an alternative to the usual buy-low sell-high practice of middlemen, and allows them to more easily meet local, regional, and international market demands. TruTrade regularly engages youth as agents and women are encouraged to take on the agent role.

Working with DYNAMIC presented TruTrade with unique efficiencies, such as pre-screening and a strong work ethic. TruTrade requires agents to have official documentation and records as critical parts of due diligence. Youth have been functionally pre-screened. They routinely visit parents and require police clearance. Additionally, youth do not want to let DYNAMIC down. They have a sense of duty to put the skills they have acquired into practice and be the “top flying agents.” While TruTrade trained youth agents in its technology and business practices, the company would prefer to hire DYNAMIC-trained over other youth. This indicates that DYNAMIC creates value (the trained youth) through the PE model.

They (youth from DYNAMIC) are really much, much easier to work with compared to the ones that we select. – TruTrade

Additionally, DYNAMIC trade agents have opened up their personal social networks to TruTrade to source other potential agents, representing an opportunity to expand the number of available, trained youth, independent of DYNAMIC.

VTIs: Youth also had many constraints with regards to accessing formal education beyond primary school system. To facilitate workforce development and job competitiveness, DYNAMIC subsidized the cost of youth attending VTI courses on various agriculture and livestock topics. DYNAMIC also built capacity of VTIs in market assessment to make training courses market-relevant; co-developed agricultural curricula to be relevant and meet certification standards; and created linkages for graduates with the private sector to foster access to market opportunities upon completion of technical training, including links to opportunities leveraged through cost shares with businesses. Most of the graduates were male (70 percent) and had not completed primary school. They found employment in commercial agriculture (45 percent), as self-employed (31 percent), and in formal employment (12 percent).

An important advancement was the establishment of outreach or satellite centers, where youth are trained within their communities—especially young mothers who were unable or unwilling to move because VTIs were out of reach. This has led to increased enrollment of young women at the outreach training centers (i.e., there is a 60-percent enrollment rate for young women in Karamoja). DYNAMIC recognized there were multiple streams of vocational training opportunity to be pursued and that they would reach scale differently, involve different types of education, and result in different opportunities. Partner Homa Farms, a private agriculture business, provided technical training like a VTI, because they offered start-up support for young farmers.

Access to finance and inputs: DYNAMIC research showed that a key barrier to youth's ability to profit from agriculture is their access to productive resources, particularly inputs. DYNAMIC took long- and short-term strategies to address this gap. Many youth are engaged in informal savings, but are limited by their earning potential. In order for youth to be able to access improved inputs, DYNAMIC supported input suppliers to discount the price of high-quality seeds for youth's first harvest by 70 percent as a means to bridge the financial burden until the first crop could be monetized. This represented high risk: Many youth businesses were not resilient enough to survive a poor initial harvest, drought, and/or pests, and were unable to continue their businesses. They often lost their 30-percent share of the investment, not to mention emotional and physical labor costs. Overall, the seed discount approach was considered successful in that thousands of youth received vouchers the companies provided, both individually and in groups. While many youth were ultimately unsuccessful, others earned enough to buy the seeds again at full price, which was the intended outcome. An unintended consequence was the high demand the discounts produced—there were not enough high-quality seeds available in the market during the following planting season, which was an important lesson learned around market adjustment. One market actor noted that the subsidy created tension in the market, because parents could take advantage of the subsidy in lieu of their children or parents demanded that the subsidy be passed on to them as well.

In the long term, to stimulate new players in the formal financial markets to enter DYNAMIC's geographic targets, DYNAMIC took a more facilitative approach—incentivizing financial actors to provide financial literacy training and education about financial products and services. For example, DYNAMIC has worked with financial service providers to extend the Bank Agency network from urban to rural areas. This has resulted in more accounts opened. Additionally, mature VSLAs have been linked to the banks so that they can, in time, build sufficient banking history to be eligible to apply for formal loan products. DYNAMIC has supported the digitization of VSLAs to improve their visibility and attractiveness to banks.

Young women's inclusion: DYNAMIC did not have a gender target or gender components, nor was there an initial gender rapid analysis or assessment. However, the Activity operated based on a set of gender principles. In the final years of the program, once data were analyzed and adaptive methodologies were more firmly ingrained, a number of gaps for women were identified. Some examples are the better management of stereotypes, physical access and timing of training sessions, parental consent and family obligations, and management of gender dynamics in youth groups. DYNAMIC has been able to make provisions for some of these—for example, making childcare available for young mothers so they can focus on training. They have also been able to celebrate some good practices, such as the benefits of social cohesion and opportunity for empowerment nurtured through group membership and leadership. DYNAMIC has identified that partners require more support to integrate gender balance in their recruitment of private-sector agents and implement gender-sensitive outreach methods to reach more female youth, among others. They plan to mitigate this through a gender equality training specifically for market actors.

DYNAMIC similarly reached just under 50 percent of women (out of 125,000). They believe they may have come further had the program been designed intentionally for gender inclusion at the outset.

SRH facilitation: DYNAMIC's peer engagement curriculum covered some SRH topics. These topics were introduced later in the DYNAMIC program, so most PEs who started as a self-sustaining service provider may not have been able to offer SRH training. The approach where a PE offers services against a fee has worked for providing life skills training for VTI students or specific components such as drafting a constitution for VSLAs, but not (yet) for SRH.

It was noted that without health services in many of the communities, or referral pathways, there was insufficient potential to take a market approach with regards to SRH.

CONCLUSION

How does facilitation intensity affect the capacity of an MSD approach to address critical components of young women's and men's development?

The YLA and DYNAMIC cases demonstrate that the level of facilitation intensity, flexibility with regards to when and how youth are to be engaged, and the program logic model play a large part in the capacity of MSD Activities to address youth's—male and female—development. Advantageously, the response to the needs of youth and/or the market can change over time depending on whose needs implementing partners listen to the most intently (youth or the partner). The fundamental difference between these two Activities is the emphasis they placed on youth development for inclusion in the market vs. market development for youth inclusion, which, to a certain extent, dictates the level of facilitation intensity.

Higher intensity interventions, such as DYNAMIC, can address many components of youth development—life skills, financial literacy, business training, parental engagement, leadership, community involvement, and SRH—while engaging youth as agents of change and addressing constraints in the market and enabling environment using MSD tactics. DYNAMIC's PE model and discounting of inputs dealt with some of youth's largest challenges—education and access to finance. The program employed an innovative method of putting youth in the facilitator position as agents who would not only provide services to other youth, but recruit them for companies and their own education services. DYNAMIC worked in fewer districts and achieved high levels of concentration of engagement (high percentage of youth reached) in each.

YLA was originally conceived to be able to intervene in some areas typically outside of an MSD Activity's realm (basic education, health). The Activity quickly came to realize that these barriers to youth inclusion were not the ones they could address well. They pivoted to focus squarely on the market system actors who could, over time, provide not only employment but also technical skills, non-traditional opportunities, and non-farm opportunities. YLA relied on the will of the market actors to address youth engagement, training, and improved work conditions. YLA's lower level of facilitation characterized by business development services, data provision, and facilitation of partnerships was able to secure opportunities for youth, male and female, in high numbers and at a lower cost per person. YLA's intervention was more expansive geographically and, therefore, achieved less penetration in the youth market. Understanding the relative merits of these two programs in terms of youth development should be complemented by a study of the cost and sustainability of the models.

In youth development approaches, youth inclusion means youth of a younger age and of all genders. In these MSD Activities, most—but not all—staff from the two Activities agree that the youngest age

cohort is not well served by the range of tactics and partners available to develop opportunities that respond to their developmental stage. It is not yet proven to what extent younger youth interventions that largely build assets and exposure will result in improved livelihoods. In both cases, equal gender representation was achieved, although nuances of gender integration were made clearer due to experimentation, learning papers, and incidents. An adaptable outcome reporting system is warranted to deepen the understanding of the impact for young women in both cases and understand the extent to which facilitative approaches, intensive or not, affect harmful social norms, disempowerment, and unequal gender roles. This would allow responses to new opportunities and barriers—superb Activity additionalities—to be captured as project outcomes, as opposed to anecdotally.

Finally, this case attempted to determine whether youth MSD programs could not only fulfill employment and income-generation objectives, but myriad youth development needs. This may be an unfair expectation. A 2020 [USAID randomized control trial in Bangladesh](#) showed that youth exposed to reproductive health topics in the workplace “*may not leave the program with substantially improved knowledge on family planning or reproductive health topics, but they leave better equipped to identify when they need more knowledge and are to seek it out.*”³⁰ Donors who grant to facilitated interventions may need to revisit expectations and recognize the limitations of an MSD approach to address youth development components, such as education and health. Perhaps the key is understanding where risks lie in not addressing the broad range of youth needs, prioritizing them, and identifying where little gains can be achieved without compromising the intent and sustainability of the intervention.

CONTACT

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³⁰ Omoeva, C., Nanda, G., Gates, S., Cunha, N., Hatch, R. and Thomas, R. (2020). Integrated Workforce Development and Family Planning and Reproductive Health for Youth in Bangladesh. Washington, DC: USAID’s YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action.

CASE STUDY 3

RISIALBANIA: INCLUSIVE PARTNER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES



Photo Credit: RisiAlbania

Activity Highlights

Name: RisiAlbania
Lead Institution(s): Helvetas, Partners Albania
Country: Albania
Donor: SDC
Value of Award: \$13.3 million
Period of Performance: 2013–2017 (Phase I); 2018–2021 (Phase II)

INTRODUCTION

This case study focuses on how RisiAlbania, a youth employment Activity using a market systems development (MSD) approach, partners with the private sector to facilitate inclusive economic development and drive systems change that results in sustained impacts for male and female youth. Informed by interviews with staff and two private-sector partners, it explores the tools and approaches RisiAlbania uses to identify, select, develop, monitor, grow, and analyze impactful partnerships. This case study highlights effective strategies to engage partner organizations that have received limited or no previous donor support, tactics that go beyond “making the business case” for inclusion, critical points (e.g., project co-design, pilots) at which partners’ buy-in and capacity can be strengthened, and monitoring approaches and analytical frameworks that support the Activity’s efforts to drive more inclusive business models at scale.

This case explores a core **learning question**: What **tools and approaches are used to identify, select, develop, sustain, and evaluate impactful private-sector partnerships** to reduce barriers and improve opportunities for male and female youth’s inclusion?

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Select the right market sectors** to achieve outcomes for male and female youth. This often goes beyond looking at where male and female youth currently participate, and assessing end markets and value chain upgrades that can bring about specific opportunities for them.

This is one of four case studies produced as part of a larger review of how MSD Activities include women and youth, entitled *Youth, Women, and Market Systems Development in Agriculture and Supporting Markets: Landscape Analysis and Case Studies Report*. The study was conducted for USAID by the Feed the Future AWE program and is available on the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC).

2. Employ multiple strategies and avenues to **attract more diverse partners**, including having comprehensive partnership guidelines and various entry points for inclusion.
3. **Approach the partnership as a business venture**: Use the business case as opposed to the social case, employ business language, co-invest, pay for performance, and be sensitive to how smart partnership design can influence shifts in business behaviors that may limit inclusion.
4. **Use pilot activities to refine models and demonstrate proof of success** in inclusive business models, especially in small markets; these can be used to attract/crowd-in others.
5. **Use analytical tools and mixed methods** to capture unintended consequences and maintain the focus on progress toward systemic impact.

ABOUT THE ACTIVITY

RisiAlbania is an innovative youth employment Activity supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by a consortium of Helvetas and Partners Albania, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance and Economy of the Republic of Albania. It focuses on job demand, skills supply, career guidance and intermediation, and mainstreams gender and social inclusion throughout its interventions. It takes a market systems approach, partnering with Albanian and international private-sector actors to encourage innovative solutions that foster job creation and provide more employment opportunities for young men and women in Albania, aged 15 to 29. RisiAlbania works in tourism, agribusiness, and information and communication technologies (ICT). In the agribusiness sector, they focus on medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs), fresh fruit and vegetables (FFV), and business development services (BDS).

CONTEXT

A quarter³¹ of Albanians between the ages of 15 and 29 are unemployed. Due to household responsibilities, young women have a much lower labor force participation rate (35 percent)³² and higher inactivity rates than young men. Young women also tend to experience poor employment conditions, are concentrated in low-paying sectors and roles, and work in unpaid family jobs. Agriculture employs two-fifths of the workforce, but only represents a fifth of the gross domestic product and is characterized by low job creation and poor job quality. Youth are around 20 percent of employees (10 percent of the 20 percent are female youth) in FFV, and almost 60 percent in the MAPs sector (70 percent of the 60 percent are female youth).³³

Nevertheless, RisiAlbania sees potential to enhance young women's and men's access to quality agribusiness jobs through several **strategic areas**: stimulated market access for agribusinesses, better functioning BDS provision market that serves rural businesses, and a shift toward in-country value-added products. Through this strategy, RisiAlbania targets young men and women who are:

³¹ Based on a 5-year average from the Albanian Institute of Statistics, youth unemployment in Albania is around 26 percent. In 2019, it was 21.4 percent.

³² More information available at: <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/labour-market-and-education/employment-and-unemployment-from-lfs/#tab2>

³³ From RisiAlbania Project Document 2013–2017, *AnnexAnnex 11: First sub-sector analyses – Agro processing*, pp. 17, 21.

- Low-skilled and currently working in agriculture in low-quality, precarious³⁴ jobs that are highly vulnerable to market shocks
- Recently graduated from university and unaware of the possibilities for quality employment in the agribusiness sector
- Unemployed, but can be interested in working in the agribusiness or agro-tourism sectors

STRATEGY AND LEARNING

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT: SECTOR SELECTION FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

RisiAlbania began with a series of market screening and sector selection analyses³⁵ to prioritize sectors; they looked at sectors that: (1) already employ young people, (2) have the potential to employ more young people, and/or (3) present potential for growth (e.g., upward export trends). From this, FFV and MAPs were identified to be particularly youth-friendly in the agribusiness sector. The sub-sectors also presented opportunities to absorb considerable numbers of low-skilled, intensive labor (increased number of jobs), while also generating higher skilled job opportunities (improved quality of jobs). BDS was also identified as a supporting market necessary for agribusiness development. This process was a critical step in setting the project up for success, noting that:

...[W]e're not trying to fit a square into a circle, we're just trying to make sure that the potential that there is for youth employment is actually exploited by supporting the private sector to grow and create opportunities for young people. – RisiAlbania staff

LAUNCHING A BUSINESS VENTURE APPROACH TO PARTNERSHIPS

RisiAlbania prioritizes working through local stakeholders, especially private-sector actors, that are key to executing their strategy in each sub-sector and generating decent jobs for male and female youth. This includes agro-exporters and producer associations, input and equipment providers, certification bodies, supermarkets, BDS providers, and post-harvest and processing businesses. In approaching partnerships, RisiAlbania see themselves as partners in a business venture, observing that:

Often, when we're talking to people who have no idea about how the donor community works, we... use the language of venture capitalists or impact investors, just really trying to emphasize that we're not going to give out a grant, but we're going to co-invest in a business idea and our expected return on investment is jobs for young people. – RisiAlbania staff

Having partners perceive them as a business instead of as donors or an NGO helps staff talk to firms so they can see the benefits of incorporating gender, youth, and social inclusion considerations into

³⁴ “Precarious” includes insecure jobs that are often the first to disappear when markets experience shocks, and jobs that are not guaranteed through formal employment contracts.

³⁵ RisiAlbania uses a variety of secondary and primary data collection tools to analyze markets and sectors. This includes sourcing secondary data from public and private institutions as well as end market data, and collecting primary data from stakeholders (e.g., male and female youth, businesses, associations, etc.) through focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

business plans from a business rather than an equity or social inclusion perspective. This trust and shared language allow RisiAlbania to introduce these concepts and present a convincing value proposition for including women and youth.

In identifying and designing these partnerships, RisiAlbania tailors several steps to enhance inclusion, as presented below.

PARTNER IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION: ENGAGING MORE THAN THE USUAL DONOR-DRIVEN ORGANIZATIONS

RisiAlbania uses two main strategies to identify and select partners, including ***eliciting stakeholders during sector studies and market research*** to develop short lists of potential partners leading to direct outreach by staff, and ***creative design and marketing of open calls for co-investment proposals***. Sector studies provide an overview of the marketplace and suggest entry points for RisiAlbania staff to spend time and efforts on engaging with potential partners. Furthermore, because traditional “open calls” tend to attract many organizations that have received donor funding in the past,³⁶ RisiAlbania adopts strategies to get the word out to actors less aware of the donor universe, including private-sector firms that may not be as familiar with applying to or obtaining donor support. This includes being very targeted and intentional in the terms of reference so as not to dissuade actors less familiar with this process from submitting proposals, and securing wide dissemination among networks more diverse actors are tapped into. It also includes ongoing engagement with the private sector to ensure support to firms less familiar with the application process in language they understand.

Once RisiAlbania identifies³⁷ or selects³⁸ partners, the Activity screens them against criteria set out in Helvetas’ partnership guidelines,³⁹ performs legal and financial due diligence, and checks their reputation before proceeding to co-design an intervention. This process also includes an assessment of partners’ gender and social inclusion capacities:

³⁶ Donor-driven organizations in Albania traditionally have experience in and are well-positioned to secure funding from donor organizations. Often, these organizations comprise a majority of the entities applying for donor funds or open calls, and are well positioned to secure partnership agreements because of their experience and capacity with these types of funds.

³⁷ Partner identification refers to direct contracting with partners typically elicited through sector studies, market research, and direct identification processes.

³⁸ Partner selection refers to competitive procedures with partners typically generated through open calls for co-investment proposals.

³⁹ This process is facilitated using Helvetas’ *Quality Criteria for Partnerships*: https://www.helvetas.org/Publications-PDFs/Switzerland/Partnership%20Approach/Quality%20Criteria%20Partnerships_English.pdf

Assessing the Gender and Social Inclusion Capacities of Partners

RisiAlbania has a suite of tools they use to identify, select, and work with partners, including a gender and social inclusion partner assessment tool, which includes questions such as:

- Do they have gender and social inclusion in their vision or mission statement?
- Do they have equitable numbers of male and female staff?
- How many women are in management positions?
- Do they have capacities to work with women and other disadvantaged groups?

Over time, RisiAlbania has adapted these tools to fit the specific partners they work with, understanding that a right-sized approach gets them farther with partners in terms of inclusion outcomes. RisiAlbania has customized and shortened the tools to only include topics relevant to the individual partners. All calls and partnerships are developed with inputs from RisiAlbania's gender equality and social inclusion lead.

CO-DESIGNING THE PARTNERSHIP

RisiAlbania works with partners to negotiate and co-create a business plan prior to signing a contract. Partners need to think their idea through. In the narrative and financial business plan, they must show they have the willingness, vision, and financial capabilities to make the idea work (indicating commercial sustainability even after the project support ends). They must also show how their idea is inclusive. Gender, youth, and social inclusion considerations are discussed as a means to encourage private-sector partners to see the market potential of working toward more inclusive outcomes, rather than communicating it as a directive or requirement. Co-design sessions focus on job quality and job creation, using information from the sector analyses and partners' own experience to discuss upgrades within sectors that will catalyze more inclusive labor practices, including decent working conditions and standards. RisiAlbania also seeks to **understand business behaviors**, including why businesses act in certain ways, to craft tailored rationale and value proposition statements. For example, RisiAlbania found that not only small, but medium-sized businesses tend to employ family they trust over qualified external hires, which constrains their ability to professionalize their services and exports. Equipped with this information, they are able to go into co-creation with businesses with a pitch for why hiring skilled young women and men will benefit them, and a plan to address issues they may have around trust when bringing external resources into their management teams.

Once the idea and business plan are fully fleshed out, RisiAlbania enters into a partnership agreement. Partnership agreements have **minimum inclusion requirements**, including (1) a minimum percentage of

"What Works" to Engage the Private Sector for Male and Female Youth

- Have minimum gender requirements, with opportunities to expand and present the requirements as part of a business case
- Approach the partnership as a business venture, where the expected return on investment is jobs for male and female youth
- Act like an investor or venture capitalist, not a donor
- Pay for results, tie payments to jobs created for male and female youth
- Adapt to fit the needs of partners instead of taking a one-size-fits-all approach
- Understand what drives business behaviors and attitudes
- Evaluate the idea as opposed to keeping strictly to scoring criteria; if an idea for inclusion is there, it is worth continuing to develop
- Focus on influencing rather than directing

the businesses⁴⁰ that partners' target for services must be owned or co-owned by women; and (2) when capacity building activities are anticipated, training participants must include an equitable number of males and females, including having both spouses of a household attend training. In partnership agreements, RisiAlbania's support ranges from capacity building, linkages and networking, to financial support where partners are also expected to **co-invest** with RisiAlbania, typically 50 percent or more of the requested amount. In partnerships more focused on gender and social inclusion, RisiAlbania may decrease the co-investment requirement for partners that are less commercially stable or risk-averse. Staff expressed not wanting to limit the pool of potential partners and ideas, noting:

You have this idea; we believe in it. We know it's risky. So, we're going to buy off part of the risk. – RisiAlbania staff

RisiAlbania employs a **pay for results approach**, whereby partners have milestones they must achieve to be paid. Typically, the last payment milestones are tied to key performance indicators, which toward the end of a contract, include job creation for young women and men.

PILOT IMPLEMENTATION: TESTING APPROACHES AND LEARNING BY DOING

In keeping with an MSD approach, RisiAlbania starts its partnerships with pilots to test out ideas, probe partner commitment, and demonstrate to other firms “the how and why” (e.g., benefits) of more inclusive business models. If pilots prove successful, the Activity supports expansion either through pilot partners widening their outreach and/or by adding additional partners to the intervention to support them to copy the innovation; however, in general, RisiAlbania requires that partners demonstrate in their business plans a clear vision for the business change they want to introduce and how that will be sustained beyond their partnership with RisiAlbania. As an example pilot, RisiAlbania links private-sector BDS providers with rural agribusinesses to increase agribusiness capacity in developing business plans and proposals necessary to obtain European Union (EU) grants. The pilot intervention strived to show BDS providers that currently target services to businesses in the capital that rural businesses can be an attractive client, and to rural businesses that it is worth investing in consultancy support not only for EU grants, but also for other services, such as accounting or marketing. The text box below profiles AZ Consulting's experience piloting an inclusive business model through a partnership with RisiAlbania.

AZ Consulting Assesses Commercial Viability of Focusing on Women and Youth

RisiAlbania supported a pilot with AZ Consulting, a female youth-led BDS provider largely operating in Tirana, Albania. AZ Consulting served 84 clients last year, with a staff of nine (100 percent youth, 89 percent female). Prior to working with RisiAlbania, AZ Consulting had not considered targeting female-owned rural businesses and had a small share of youth clients focused on start-ups in their portfolio. Their traditional customers were well-established companies with high visibility in the market, most owned and operated by adult men. RisiAlbania worked with AZ Consulting to explore youth- and female-owned agribusinesses as a potential high-growth market, supported by data from the Ministry of Agriculture on number of youth- and women-owned agribusinesses and statistics from the Albania Investment Development Agency. Effective approaches and learning include:

Effective approaches:

⁴⁰ In some cases, this means farmers or harvesters who enter into buyer–supplier relationships with exporters.

- Targeted marketing strategies, including tapping into networks and attending events where youth are present, are more effective than waiting for youth to find you. Marketing campaigns should appeal to youth interests—for example, AZ Consulting developed animated social media ads, which would not appeal to their usual customers, but were highly successful with youth.
- Lowering co-financing requirements for youth customers in general, and for female youth more specifically, can help overcome obstacles and accommodate female youth who tend to be more risk-averse, while setting a foundation for longer term commercial relationships.
- Online marketing is a good way to influence the industry, showcasing a more inclusive business model and tactics for targeting male and female youth. AZ Consulting noted that they had influenced the decisions of two to three competitors in the industry to adopt similar marketing strategies to attract more youth.

Learning:

- AZ Consulting's status as a youth-led business mainly staffed by women attracts other youth and women clients, and helps understand women- and youth-specific needs.
- Youth attract other youth, which is a potential value proposition. AZ Consulting observed that youth peer and referral networks were robust, often leading to two to three or more youth customers per every youth-led business they served.
- Male and female youth-owned companies are often quicker to pay and save the company costs on contract drafting and negotiation than more well-established customers.
- While the results of the pilot were successful, AZ Consulting recognizes that it will still take time to shift to a more balanced portfolio, comprising many more rural youth and female customers.

Through this pilot, AZ Consulting not only learned how to serve rural clients and expand their customer base, but also saw the value of including male and female youth in their business model. By the end of the pilot, they served significantly more youth and female customers, with 30 percent youth and about 5 percent female now comprising their broader portfolio. While 5 percent may seem small, given the overwhelmingly low amount of female-owned businesses currently operating in the Albanian agribusiness sector, it is a substantial milestone. AZ Consulting was also able to show that they could sustain their win rate—100 percent of grants applied for were won, with no changes as a result of taking on new and potentially “riskier” clients.

MEL: CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPACTFUL, SUCCESSFUL, AND SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

RisiAlbania characterizes impactful, successful partnerships in several ways: (1) quantity and quality of jobs; (2) increased buy-in and incentives of partners as a result of the partnership experience; and (3) contribution of the partnership to the project's overall goal of systemic change via copying and crowding in of other actors into a business model.

Job quality—defined by three main International Labour Organization's indicators around working conditions, decent pay, and job security—and **number of jobs** are assessed through partner reports and triangulated through surveys, impact assessments, and qualitative field assessments. RisiAlbania assesses job quality through qualitative indicators, including improved security through contract farming and career progression opportunities linked to the professionalization of export practices and expanded access to markets. The project assesses the number of jobs through quantitative indicators linked to the number of new full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created, job placement through private and public intermediaries, and improved skills, among others. These metrics align with the three programmatic areas of emphasis in RisiAlbania, including a job demand component, a skills supply component, and a career guidance and intermediation component. To this end, under Phase I (2013–2017) of the

Activity,⁴¹ RisiAlbania created 950 jobs for young people (53 percent female) by increasing demand for new jobs for youth in the private sector and placed 5,400 people in jobs (53 percent female) through public and private intermediaries under the career guidance and intermediation component of the Activity. In addition, 9,700 young people (48 percent female) improved their skills and 390 businesses have invested Euro 6.4 million (\$7.2 million) in food processing, tourism, and ICT sectors.

The qualitative field assessments are particularly valuable in obtaining insights around intended and unintended impacts. For example, one survey among newly employed women found they experienced increased time poverty and labor burdens, because they had not seen any reductions in their household responsibilities despite taking on the paid job. The Activity reflects on learning elicited through these assessments, including exploring what aspects of their programming need to be adapted or expanded to address constraints to male and female youth's employment. For example, RisiAlbania is exploring adding childcare services as a cross-market function they support as key to alleviating women's time poverty and labor burdens. Other applied learning has resulted in ensuring that exporters understand the importance of including both husbands and wives in all training and information sessions as a means to reduce gender gaps in access to information and challenge gender stereotypes. Partners see the benefit of this practice, mainly when it comes to applying and obtaining standards and certification, because women have shown better aptitudes for record-keeping and good agronomic practices. In addition to conducting qualitative field assignments, RisiAlbania regularly reviews interventions, triangulates data sources, shares knowledge with partners, promotes best practices, and uses information and learning to improve engagement strategies with future partners.

Bioalba Group, one of RisiAlbania's partners working in the MAPs sector on certification, traceability, processing, and exporting to high-value end markets, approaches youth inclusion from a business perspective, noting that they aim first and foremost for their business model to be profitable and sustainable. They view youth as compatible with this vision because they are innovative and quick learners, and see advantages to driving down high labor costs if the sector as a whole is able to retain more youth in Albania. Bioalba Group sees their role as intervening to facilitate changes in the market by identifying end markets with demand necessary to drive profitable upgrades in the sector that lead to better quality jobs for male and female youth. Bioalba Group also aligns and works with local NGOs that are better equipped to address social issues that need to be simultaneously worked on for male and female youth to access economic opportunities generated. This includes work on women's empowerment, and addressing women's labor burdens and entrenched gender and social norms.

It's kind of a synergy on the needs... so, it's a project where everyone is winning. – Bioalba Group

A successful partnership also gives partners the **incentive and ability to sustain and scale interventions**. Bioalba Group and AZ Consulting both expressed a strong commitment to maintain and build on the interventions they initiated with RisiAlbania because they saw clear benefits to their businesses through participation in the pilots. AZ Consulting rapidly expanded their customer base while maintaining service quality (a 100-percent success rate in securing funds through AZ Consulting's support). They also brought the business model tested under their pilot with RisiAlbania into their broader business operations, and have plans to scale to new areas with new actors (e.g., municipalities with low grant absorption rates). Bioalba Group noted similar success in their pilot with RisiAlbania (see

⁴¹ Mid-term results for Phase II (2018–2021) of the Activity were being calculated at the time of drafting of this case study.

text box), including the need to collaborate with other local actors who can support social and economic transformation.

Impactful partnerships can also **lead other actors to copy and scale proven models**. RisiAlbania uses the *Adopt, Adapt, Expand, Respond* framework as a planning tool to articulate a vision for systemic change, and as a monitoring tool to understand how they are progressing toward that vision. RisiAlbania further segments actors by their willingness to adopt new business practices or ideas—Innovators, Early Adopters, and Followers—and looks for ways to support adoption among those three tiers of actors. To stimulate crowding-in, RisiAlbania facilitates partner exchange on inclusive business models and practices, and partners with media for the dissemination of inspiring approaches. This is especially important given that Albania is a small country, with a relatively limited number of private-sector market actors in each sector, which results in ample opportunities for shared learning and copying of business models.

This [copying] is pretty normal in every industry in Albania, one innovates, and everyone follows. – RisiAlbania private-sector partner

For example, in 2019, RisiAlbania organized a workshop for 17 partners from different sectors to discuss the importance of diversity, inclusion, and equity in the business world. In a follow-up questionnaire administered 2 months after the session, attendees reported that participation in the workshop helped them identify diversity and inclusion opportunities and led to an increase in female employees. Feedback also highlighted the need to create more business cases for diversity and inclusion, and establish flexible business models for young women and single mothers.⁴²

Another example is RisiAlbania's work with exporters in FFV; there are about 50 consolidated exporters in Albania, which makes it “a quite manageable number to monitor and try to influence.” The Activity spent time segmenting them and has reached a point where messages to foster scale-up and replication are easily targeted. In this example, RisiAlbania collaborates with a certification body to generate information on standards, while working to stimulate the consultancy market to develop services linked to obtaining certification. RisiAlbania also works with four FFV exporters to show that it is worthwhile to invest in group Global Good Agronomic Practices (GAP) certification, because it opens market opportunities in high-value markets, which command higher prices for their goods. From RisiAlbania's side, it increases the security of the contractual relationships along the value chain, while making exporters more mindful of labor conditions, job quality, use of technology, and opening up more jobs in higher functions of the value chain (e.g., packing or managing machinery) for young women and men. The business model has worked to create 125 FTE jobs for young women and men, with the expectation that it would create more than 500 FTE jobs by the end of the Activity. Now, RisiAlbania wants the rest of the market to hear about it, support the service market to deliver products that will allow them to obtain certification, and stimulate a demand for those services, instead of partnering individually with further exporters. The Activity does this through ongoing information generation and sharing via different platforms, including media, business cases, and events where partners share their models and stories.

⁴² RisiAlbania currently works on piloting childcare services models to address constraints to female labor market inclusion. This is something they are initially piloting in urban areas, with the intention to determine whether they can scale to other sectors and rural environments.

To **sustain partnerships**, RisiAlbania includes an exit strategy and a vision for scale-up in concept notes at design stage. For example, in the same certification example used above, RisiAlbania anticipated that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) would be a key actor in securing sustainability of these certification schemes, so they ensured MARD representatives had enough information over the 2 years of engagement with the Activity through bilateral information sessions, jointly organized Global GAP STOP TOUR, field visits with MARD representatives, and the promotion of partners as champions of change via mass and social media outlets. As a result, MARD now includes Global GAP certification and group-level GAP certification in their national grants.

While RisiAlbania's Private Sector Development component primarily focuses on private-sector partnerships, the Activity also encourages public-sector engagement by developing **public-private partnerships** and strengthening public-private dialogue on improving the business environment. By brokering relationships between private and public actors, RisiAlbania generates broader support for inclusive business models, sustains partner interventions, and encourages public-sector investment through, for example, land leasing and agricultural service provision in the MAPs sector.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, RisiAlbania's experience shows us that market-based approaches and working through the private sector can facilitate jobs in the agricultural sector for male and female youth. This is best achieved when implementers use a variety of tailored approaches and tools at each stage of the partner engagement process. Critical to RisiAlbania's success was (1) identifying a more diverse pool of partners, beyond organizations used to obtaining donor support, all of whom serve the project's target beneficiaries to varying degrees, (2) approaching the partnership as a business venture with a strong business case, and (3) continuing to make the business case and build greater buy-in for inclusive business models through piloting. Having a vision of sustainability and systemic change from design and piloting stages also allowed RisiAlbania to see tangible results in later stages, including crowding-in from other market actors and preliminary evidence of public-sector actors taking on new and expanded functions to support inclusive business models.

There are context-specific characteristics and issues that remain particular to this case, including:

- Albania's small size and relatively small number of market actors, which were analyzed using a detailed market analysis and segmentation, made for ample opportunities to disseminate information around inclusive business models and influence private-sector actors.
- Sector selection is essential to achieve outcomes for male and female youth. Sector-specific issues and the co-development of business models did not always have an explicit gender or youth focus when discussed with the private sector. This may have some influence on the willingness to get greater buy-in from the private sector in the beginning, because innovations are not presented as a gender or youth model. Examples of this were abundant in the FFV and MAPs sector, where the emphasis was on certification, traceability, identifying end markets with quality rather than price standards, and establishing formal contracts with workers—all models that were not explicitly gender- or youth-focused, but generated great opportunities for inclusion and sustainability.⁴³

⁴³ RisiAlbania's understanding of sustainability encompasses financial, institutional, environmental and social aspects.

- Systemic barriers to female youth's inclusion persist, especially in the agricultural sector, such as moving female youth into more formal employment, and expanding access to entrepreneurship and decision making. As the Bioalba Group text box shows, this could require an expanded pool of partners beyond the private sector, looking at public or civil society actors with a clear mandate to work on these issues, and facilitating greater connections to work together on these issues.
- Robust monitoring and evaluation that have direct links to programmatic decision making are needed to make sure inclusion results are realized and negative or potentially harmful results are addressed, especially before and during the scale-up phase. For example, where RisiAlbania captured insights around increases in female labor burdens as a result of partner interventions, the Activity is trying to raise awareness and incorporate insights into contracts and milestones with partners, but recognizes that the issue is salient and further work is needed to address it systemically. Similarly, one consulting firm reflected on the fact that youth customers tended to save them costs, because contract negotiation took far less time and they were much more flexible than adults. This highlights potential vulnerabilities youth have in less bargaining power, leading to unfair terms of agreement and/or possible exploitation, and presents an opportunity for Activities to address potential information asymmetry or power imbalances.

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CASE STUDY 4

PRISMA: DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE BUSINESS CASE FOR INCLUSIVE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS



Source: PRISMA

Activity Highlights

Name: PRISMA
Lead Institution: Palladium
Country: Indonesia
Donor: DFAT
Value of Award: Phase I: AUD 77 (\$50m)
Phase II: AUD 88 (\$58m)
Period of Performance: 2013–2018
(Phase I); 2019–2023 (Phase II)

INTRODUCTION

In a market systems development (MSD) approach focused on agriculture and supporting markets, implementing partners engage market actors, such as the private sector and government, to lead activities and perform interventions to drive long-term systems change that results in more sustainable and inclusive outcomes for food security and economic growth. It is critically important to ensure that market actor-led approaches are inclusive, because without specific attention to inequalities between groups based on gender, age, physical and mental ability, ethnicity, religion, or other, it is possible to inadvertently replicate or exacerbate these inequalities. To address gender inequalities, implementers need proven, context-appropriate tools and approaches to engage market actors and support the development of their capacities to integrate gender considerations and promote women's inclusion in interventions and business models. The Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Promoting Rural Incomes through Support for Markets in Agriculture (PRISMA) Activity was chosen as a case study example to demonstrate a fundamental aspect of MSD—how to work with the private sector to develop effective business cases for inclusion.

This case explores a core **learning question**: What **tools and approaches are used to identify, select, develop, sustain, and evaluate impactful private-sector partnerships** to reduce barriers and improve opportunities for women's inclusion?

This is one of four case studies produced as part of a larger review of how MSD programs include women and youth, entitled *Youth, Women, and Market Systems Development in Agriculture and Supporting Markets: Landscape Analysis and Case Studies Report*. The study was conducted for USAID by the Feed the Future Advancing Women's Empowerment (AWE) program and is available on the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC).

ABOUT THE ACTIVITY

PRISMA is an MSD Activity that works to reduce poverty by fostering inclusive economic growth in the agriculture, horticulture, livestock, and aquaculture sectors. It is in its second 5-year phase (Phase II), which began in 2019 and ends in 2023. In its first phase (Phase I), it was one of four Activities under the Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Rural Economic Development (AIP-Rural, 2013–2018). PRISMA Phase I was AIP-Rural's flagship MSD Activity, complemented by Activities on agricultural finance, irrigation, and applied research. PRISMA Phase II combines these four elements in one Activity and works in six provinces of Indonesia.

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Develop a clear business case** for motivating businesses to include women, because it ensures businesses have a market-based incentive to lead and sustain inclusive interventions.
2. To engage private-sector partners, **highlight the business-case (rather than a social case) about the value of inclusion**, and speak in business language, not using development terms.
3. **Engage partners outside the agriculture sector with business structures that can be adapted or expanded to fill market gaps**, such as financing for agricultural producers or women-based agent networks, to jump start inclusion.
4. **Develop staff capacity and accountability for women's inclusion** to optimize efficiency and effectiveness. Capacity includes number of staff, as well as their skills and knowledge. PRISMA's efforts to build capacity and accountability for inclusion is their proudest achievement.
5. **Create the conditions for partner accountability in the sustainability of the inclusion intervention.** This can be enabled through their ownership over the strategy, design, and scaling efforts in the co-creation phase(s).

CONTEXT

In Indonesia, women perform about 40 percent of farm work; yet, their participation and roles as suppliers, consumers, workers, and active decision makers in farm households go largely unnoticed by the private and public sectors. In PRISMA's intervention areas and sectors, private input and service providers and public services, such as extension, do not often reach or target women. This lack of outreach leaves women with lower access to inputs, services, information, and capacity building (e.g., training) needed to optimize production and financial outcomes. A key reason firms and extension service providers have not targeted women is that they do not know their customer and client base, including the percentage of women, and thus lack the incentive to target women. Compounding this challenge, many input and service providers lack the knowledge and capacity to tailor messaging and delivery to female farmers, resulting in a failure to reach them even when they have an incentive.

STRATEGY AND LEARNING

PRISMA's objective is to address market system constraints that perpetuate smallholder farmers' poverty and low productivity, thereby improving competitiveness, efficiency, and economic outcomes. It targets the production level and seeks to reach one million smallholder farming households, increasing their net incomes by 30 percent by 2023. PRISMA seeks to improve women's benefit from their interventions by optimizing results in their current roles and expanding their involvement in male-dominated roles, such as purchasing inputs and equipment, and working as input and service agents. PRISMA's interventions and partnerships target inclusive opportunities that significantly contribute to Activity objectives and have a strong business case. Because it strives for sustainable impact at scale,

PRISMA targets partners that work across sectors, and have willingness and incentive to reach isolated communities, from multinationals to domestic firms. It also facilitates links to buyers and among partners at different market system levels, creating networks across the system for coordinated sector development. PRISMA works almost exclusively with private-sector partners and the Government of Indonesia at different levels, including a partnership with the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, where the government performs a unique market role to increase national seaweed productivity.

The Activity's approach to gender has evolved over the life of the Activity through progressive steps catalyzed by the adoption of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) gender strategy. The approach recognizes women's economic empowerment (WEE) as an integral part of a commercially driven strategy, which is detailed in a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) strategy. PRISMA frames its approach as fostering WEE as a path to gender equity that covers six dimensions:

1. Economic advancement
2. Access to opportunities
3. Access to assets and services
4. Decision-making power
5. Manageable workload
6. Leadership roles and networking opportunities

Where possible, PRISMA explores opportunities to work with local organizations and programs to address social norms for transformative change. For example, PRISMA promotes female agent models and changing business norms to hire more women workers to reach female farmers. Over the years, PRISMA has increased its rigor in partner selection and expectations, and strengthened its focus on staff accountability and capacity development. It developed this integrated approach using learning from a stocktaking of its WEE work in 2017. In 2019, PRISMA adopted a twin-track approach, whereby the Activity mainstreams women within sectors and looks for opportunities to address gender-specific constraints to encourage women's participation in markets through targeted activities.

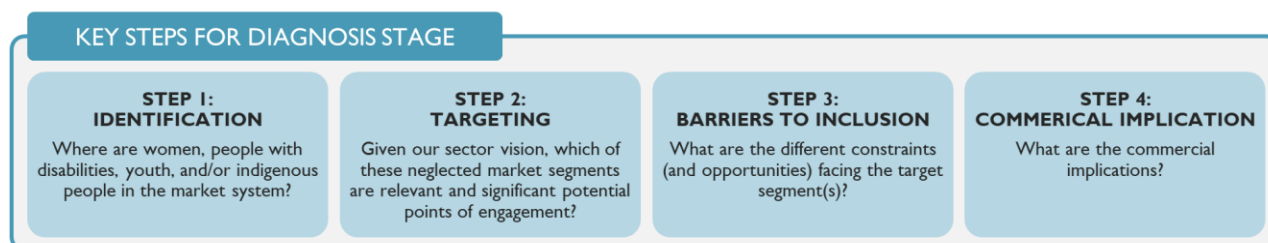
CONDUCTING MARKET RESEARCH AND DEVELOPING EVIDENCE-BASED BUSINESS CASES

PRISMA conducts market research and segmentation to develop a business case for each partner to engage in the intervention and promote women's inclusion. PRISMA's interventions typically focus on addressing production-level constraints through products and services targeted at smallholder farmers. PRISMA works with market actors to improve their ability to understand and address neglected market segments, such as women, people with disabilities, youth, and indigenous people, who represent important consumer segments with distinct preferences, behaviors, and learning strategies. These approaches require conducting research to understand these consumers' differences and preferences with a specific gender lens.

Good data leads [sic] to good design, which leads to good outcomes. This is why we need to make sure that GESI analysis is integrated into market systems analysis as early as possible. – PRISMA GESI Strategy

PRISMA follows four primary research steps to ensure that a gender lens is applied during market analysis and sector strategy development to identify whether market segments can contribute to and benefit from market system growth, as illustrated in [Exhibit 20](#).

Exhibit 20: PRISMA four research steps



SOURCE: PRISMA GESI Strategy

After completing the research stages, PRISMA analyzes the data and works to build a strong business case around identified opportunities. Opportunities vary from sector to sector and are further customized to partners—PRISMA points out that there are no one-size-fits-all GESI strategies, and a business case is generated from opportunities identified through data collection and analysis. Example opportunities that support a business case for inclusion may entail:

- Identification of an important potential customer segment
- Improvements in productivity, product quality or suitability, and/or supply chain reliability
- Opportunities to supply to niche markets that have GESI requirements
- Diversification of distribution channels
- Enhanced reputation or brand recognition

PRISMA understands that it is not enough to simply state and share this information with potential partners, which is why the development of the business case is crucial. PRISMA prepares a business case that includes the gender business opportunity as part of the broader business model and demonstrates the value of collaborating around the opportunity.

Learning from PRISMA: Engaging Partners to Expand Inclusive Opportunities Across Sectors

PRISMA identified and engaged partner PT RUMA (Ruma Limited), with its flagship service Arisan Mapan, to reach women through its extensive network of female sales agents. Arisan Mapan is a network of rotating savings groups (known in Indonesian culture as *Arisan*) that use savings to buy products and services, most of which are household related. Savings groups are coordinated by “influencers,” or agents, 95 percent of whom are female. Arisan Mapan had not worked in agriculture prior to working with PRISMA, but PRISMA engaged them to add agriculture to their portfolio, knowing that female agents are often better able to reach and influence women than male agents. PRISMA showed the partnership as an opportunity for Arisan Mapan, its agents, and women farmers to increase their incomes. PRISMA conducted market research to short-list potential products for Arisan Mapan to offer and facilitated capacity building for female agents, who did not have agricultural experience, to market the products. Arisan Mapan added 17 agricultural products (e.g., sprayers, planters, water pumps) that agents marketed to savings groups, increasing sales for Arisan Mapan, its agents, and female producers by expanding their ability to buy improved equipment. Arisan Mapan provided women with product flyers. Women shared the flyers with their husbands, balancing knowledge transfer across male and female spouses. PRISMA cites this partnership as one of its most successful engagements, because they engaged an actor to enter the sector to address cross-cutting constraints (inclusion, finance), and fostered scale and internal collaboration by cutting across commodities and services (information and communication technology [ICT], finance).

INTERVENTION AND PARTNER SELECTION

PRISMA has comprehensive *Partnership Guidelines* staff use to identify potential partners and later engage them. PRISMA's GESI strategy also serves as a guidance tool, specifying when and how to integrate inclusion issues in selection and market analysis. PRISMA's basic criteria for selecting partners are that they must be highly relevant to at least one target sector, and have the ability or willingness to partner using a facilitation approach and integrate inclusion into their work. Partners' interest and capability to reach remote locations, new markets, and hard-to-reach communities are key selection factors.

Learning from PRISMA: Developing a Business Case for Gender

PRISMA emphasizes that the way the business case is communicated is critical to building successful partnerships to promote inclusive market development. The project has found the following tactics to be the most effective in building and presenting the business case to both private and public partners:

- Involve partners around an evidence-based business case to ensure they see a market-based incentive to engage. Be prepared to make this case from the start and frame the opportunity in terms of improved business performance (e.g., increased customers or sales).
- Conduct sufficient, relevant research to frame the business opportunity in a concrete and realistic way, including sizing up the opportunity quantitatively.
- Do not assume the partner is aware of women's presence or roles in their customer base or supply chain. Be prepared to articulate untapped opportunities and support them with evidence.
- Do not overestimate women's presence in a supply chain or customer base. It is important to present accurate estimates of the potential opportunity to maintain the partner's trust and maximize the potential for sustainability.
- Use "business language" when reaching out to and negotiating with partners. For example, talk about capturing more female customers or improving female farmers' output volumes and quality, not about advancing gender equity, inclusion, and other development terms focusing on social justice issues.
- Try to anticipate the potential partner's arguments and concerns about gender-inclusive practices. Listen carefully and try to understand any expressed arguments and concerns. Respectfully highlight the business case for any arguments where relevant and discuss how you can partner to address concerns (e.g., cost-sharing to offset risk, linking to capacity-building resources, etc.).
- Monitor intervention outcomes and share results with partners so they can see the benefits in concrete, quantitative terms and solidify their belief in the intervention.

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS THAT PROMOTE INCLUSION

In addition to the market studies described above, PRISMA carries out research as part of partner implementation, including further market analysis, gender analysis, and consumer segmentation. PRISMA does not offer direct capacity development to partners; instead, it co-invests in grant-supported capacity building, facilitates networking and resource referrals, and shares knowledge. During the negotiation phase with potential partners, PRISMA staff complete a [will/skill matrix](#), which is a standard tool used as part of the Making Markets Work approach to measure a potential partner's willingness (or perceived incentives) and ability to lead implementation and integrate inclusion. The will/skill matrix is a basic MSD tool where implementers plot willingness on one axis and ability on the other, from low to high. To gauge will and skill related to inclusion, staff ask companies about their internal structure and staff capacity to integrate gender.

PRISMA also states clear expectations of sustainability for partners at the start to take initiative in strategy, design, and scaling, and take ownership of inclusion in the intervention. These expectations are

core to the market systems approach, chiefly the aspects of facilitation and co-creation. Partners invest about 50 percent of the cost of the relevant intervention. PRISMA uses ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) (referred to as Results Measurement and Learning) and partner engagement to gauge potential sustainability through implementation, and determine whether and how to adapt approaches to improve potential sustainability.

Learning from PRISMA: Market Research Supports Partner Corteva to Reach More Female Customers

PRISMA has been working with Corteva, a high-quality hybrid maize seed producer, to increase the productivity and performance of maize farmers in Madura through the adoption of better farming practices and hybrid seed. PRISMA provided a market analysis to help Corteva reach smallholders. This analysis included identifying the number of potential women customers Corteva was not currently reaching, which demonstrated the business opportunity of integrating inclusion into its marketing and delivery processes. PRISMA shared not only these data with Corteva, but also expertise in smallholder-oriented marketing approaches and information about sociocultural dynamics and constraints that affect women's decision making and production outcomes to help Corteva design targeted messaging and delivery. Corteva subsequently expanded its rural retail network, added mobile retail, hired female sales agents, cultivated women as lead farmers, launched a farm demo plot contest, and initiated women-only training sessions, all of which greatly improved producers' outcomes, while increasing hybrid maize sales and the number of women customers.

BUILDING STAFF CAPACITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

PRISMA underwent a deliberate process to build staff capacity and accountability within all levels, including management, to buy into the value of collecting and analyzing gender information to improve the quality and results of interventions. This process was initiated by engaging staff in the GESI self-evaluation and all other aspects of data collection, analysis, design, and learning processes.

PRISMA has employed a variety of capacity-development activities, from regular gender and WEE training courses, to team and individual coaching, to knowledge-sharing activities. Staff are provided with a suite of tailored tools, systems, and guidance to help them integrate gender considerations throughout the Activity life cycle. These tools support staff in diagnosing gender constraints and opportunities, developing intervention designs and business cases, and capturing learning. The tools include guidance on gender-sensitive data collection to assess women's roles and decision-making dynamics within households. WEE is also integrated into the Activity's internal processes, including the Intervention Concept Notes, Implementation Plans, Quality Management Tools, Result Chains and Intervention Steering Document, sub-sector reviews, and systemic change analyses to ensure gender considerations at every step of the process and teams' accountability for the overall quality of their portfolio outcomes.

Training has focused on building staff knowledge and ability to speak about inclusion in a language businesses understand, instead of using development terminology—for example, referring to women as potential customers instead of talking about social inclusion (see [Exhibit 21](#) for examples). PRISMA also supports staff in developing relevant expertise to share with partners through implementation, such as identifying relevant and proven tactics to reach and gain women customers.

Exhibit 21: Examples of business language vs. development terminology

WEE LANGUAGE/INTERVENTIONS	KEY TERMS/LANGUAGE FOR EXTERNAL PARTIES (PRIVATE-SECTOR PARTNERS, INTERMEDIARY SERVICE PROVIDERS, FARMERS)
Male and female farmers	Customer, consumer, or client
Gender-disaggregated data	Market intelligence data for market segmentation, retention program, strategic promotion and training
Focus group discussions	Customer focus group discussion
Gender story	Customer or business partners' testimony and review
Recruiting female field staff or female farmers as trainers-of-trainers or master trainers	Diversifying channels of promotion to various type of customers, defining the right partners of business
Increasing income of male/female farmers	Profitability of customers after using products (or services)
Inclusive access to input service skills, credit market, and other needed supports	Expanding channels for promotion, networks, customer base, early adopter customers, product influencers, or endorsers
Agency: decision making	Identifying customers' decision-making dynamics in buying and using products or services
Manageable workload	Identifying customers' pain points that may influence their decision on buying products or applying knowledge
Leadership	Identifying potential customers who have influencing roles, skills, and position in the community or villages

SOURCE: PRISMA

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN IMPACTFUL PARTNERSHIP? HOW ARE THESE PARTNERSHIPS EVALUATED?

PRISMA uses ongoing MEL and partner engagement to evaluate impact and sustainability, focusing on business outcomes and disaggregating by sex to evaluate inclusion outcomes. PRISMA's MEL system has scale, sustainability, resilience, and inclusiveness indicators to measure near-term outcomes and likely long-term impacts. PRISMA primarily measures progress and results of mainstreaming inclusion into the Activity lifecycle. Both PRISMA and partners engage in partner-level data collection, with partners' systems varying according to their capacity. Where needed, PRISMA engages businesses to improve their gender data collection and analysis as appropriate, such as capturing sex for customers and farmers in training/information sessions.

At the most basic level, impactful partnerships result in a demonstrated increase in inclusion and sales for males and females across firms, entrepreneurs, and producers. Going a step further, such partnerships scale up, with actors applying inclusion approaches outside of the intervention area (population, geography) or business unit (e.g., scaled across parent company). PRISMA's MEL and partner interviews indicate these outcomes are realized for both Corteva and Arisan Mapan; further, there is incentive and ability to sustain and scale. Corteva has been able to convert more than 30,000 smallholder farmers to hybrid maize, over half of whom are women, in part due to using women sales agents and women-only training groups. Arisan Mapan has seen increased both sales and satisfaction among its agents, and production and sales by women farmers as a result of improved access and affordability of advanced production equipment. This learning demonstrates that businesses can influence overall organizational strategies for more inclusive business practices with a tested business case.

More broadly, impactful partnerships can lead other actors to copy and scale those models given appropriate capacity to do so. However, this requires implementers and partners to disseminate their approaches and benefits to inspire others. PRISMA sees other companies adopting its intervention models introduced earlier in the program and more partners are willing to invest in inclusive practices. To share inclusive best practices among businesses, PRISMA has recently conducted and plans to share a study on female agents to capture their experiences and factors that contribute to (or limit) women's participation as effective agents in agriculture.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, PRISMA's experience shows that the market-based business case, business language, and staff accountability and capacity are critical for successfully integrating inclusion in market systems partnerships. The business case serves as both an entry and exit strategy, because it ensures the partner is committed to investing in and owning the intervention after the Activity ends. When staff have the responsibility and capacity to design and "sell" inclusive interventions, the Activity develops effective, sustainable partnerships that equitably benefit women and men.

There are a few context-specific issues other implementers should consider when applying these lessons learned:

- The degree to which social norms constrain outcomes for women and businesses differs by context and must be understood. PRISMA indicated that this issue may warrant more focus in the future, and partners such as Corteva echoed its importance. Where social norms constrain outcomes for women and partners, actors need to understand the issues and ways to address them. For example, extension and input agents ought to know how to engage males on equitable decision making where women are responsible for production, but have little decision-making power in purchasing, and to make sure women are invited to training sessions because they are key contributors to the production processes (invites are often directed to male heads of households). Arisan Mapan, Corteva, and PRISMA also noted the need to build women's confidence, which may be reduced due to social norms.
- To foster sustainability and scale-up of inclusion, market systems must include actors who can help firms realize market-based incentives for inclusion and build their inclusion capacity. Across contexts, market systems may have few or no actors filling these functions. Business development services are positioned to do so, but must have an inclusion-aware mindset, frameworks to assess the market potential for inclusion, and knowledge and skills to train businesses. Some government ministries and trade associations can also serve these functions.
- As MSD is inherently dynamic and occurs in complex, changing contexts, it is critical for implementers to monitor ongoing results. Monitoring is essential to confirm the business case holds true, determine how well expected results are realized, gauge potential sustainability, and adapt strategies and tactics to optimize results and sustainability.

The views, findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this publication are not the views of the Government of Australia and the Government of Indonesia.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX I: PROJECT LIST

PROJECT	PROJECT LOCATION	PROJECT DATES	FUNDING AMOUNT (USD)	FUNDING SOURCE	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	SECTORS	TYPE OF YOUTH AND GENDER INCLUSION
RisiAlbania	Albania	2013–2021	\$13.3M	SDC	Helvetas, Partners Albania	Agro-business, tourism, ICT, labor market services	Youth-targeted project
RDC	Bangladesh	2016–2020	\$24.5M	USAID/Feed the Future	ACDI/VOCA	Rice, maize, pulses (lentils and mung beans), and oilseeds (sunflower, sesame, and mustard); mechanization, ICT, crop protection, finance, fertilizer	Gender mainstreaming
ÉLAN RDC	DRC	2013–2018 (I) 2019–2020 (II)	\$65M	DFID	Adam Smith International	Agriculture, branchless banking, small and medium enterprise finance, transport, renewable energy	Gender mainstreaming
MDF	Fiji, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan	2011–2017 (I) 2018–2022	\$36M (I) n/a (II)	DFAT	Palladium and SwissContact	Fiji: tourism Timor-Leste: agribusiness, tourism and finance Papua New Guinea: agricultural and economic diversification Sri Lanka: tourism Pakistan: livestock, horticulture, leather, finance, nutrition, water, and energy	Gender mainstreaming

PROJECT	PROJECT LOCATION	PROJECT DATES	FUNDING AMOUNT (USD)	FUNDING SOURCE	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	SECTORS	TYPE OF YOUTH AND GENDER INCLUSION
PRISMA	Indonesia	2013–2018 (I) 2019–2023 (II)	AUD 77M/ \$51M (I) AUD 12M/\$74M (II)	DFAT	Palladium w/SwissContact	Livestock, horticulture, agriculture, and aquaculture	Gender and youth mainstreaming
AWEF	Egypt, Jordan, Palestine	2015–2020	\$13M	DFID	Development Alternatives Inc.	Egypt: citrus, food service, and food retail Jordan: sheep and goat dairy Palestine: traditional food processing	Women-targeted project
Mozambique Agricultural Innovations Activity (Inova)	Mozambique	2017–2022	\$21M	USAID/Feed the Future	Development Alternatives Inc.	Agricultural inputs distribution, supply chain management, logistics services, media and communication, marketing and research services, and other supporting services	Gender mainstreaming
PropCom Mai-Karfi	Nigeria	2012–2017 (I) 2018–2021 (II)	27 mil pounds (I); 51 mil pounds (II) \$101M	DFID	Palladium	Inputs, finance, poultry	Pivot to include women or youth mid-project
USAID PEEP	Pakistan	201–2021	\$20M	USAID	Chemonics	Horticulture, livestock, and dairy	Pivot to include women or youth mid-project
Naatal Mbay	Senegal	2015–2019	\$24M	USAID/Feed the Future	Research Triangle Institute	Irrigated rice, rainfed rice, millet, and maize	Women-targeted project

PROJECT	PROJECT LOCATION	PROJECT DATES	FUNDING AMOUNT (USD)	FUNDING SOURCE	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	SECTORS	TYPE OF YOUTH AND GENDER INCLUSION
DYNAMIC	Uganda	2015–2020	\$21.4M	Mastercard Foundation	GOAL	Agriculture, finance	Youth-targeted project
RAIN	Uganda	2011–2015	\$6.6M (Walmart - IM)	OFDA/ Walmart Foundation for Gender Inclusion	Mercy Corps	Cassava, sesame, groundnut, beans, maize, sorghum, and rice	Pivot to include women or youth mid-project
YLA	Uganda	2015–2020	\$21.5M	USAID/Feed the Future	Chemonics	Agribusiness	Youth-targeted project
Yapasa	Zambia	2014–2019	\$7.6M	SIDA	ILO and FAO	Aquaculture, soybeans, and other horticultural products	Youth-targeted project
Financial Sector Deepening	Zambia	2016–2019	\$3.4M	SIDA/DFID	Financial Sector Deepening Trust	Finance	Gender and youth mainstreaming

ANNEX 2: LIST OF SELECT RESOURCES

The research team has compiled this select list resources shared or identified in the course of this research. The tables below organize the resources into the four key sections from the report: (1) Planning for Inclusion, (2) Implementation, (3) Adaptation and Learning, and (4) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL).

Where possible, direct links to the resource are provided. The associated Activity is identified to encourage others to reach out directly for additional information and explore opportunities to proactively cross-pollinate resources and share data.

PLANNING FOR INCLUSION RESOURCES

RESOURCE NAME	DESCRIPTION	ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY
ÉLAN RDC GESI Review (2015)	This comprehensive Gender Inclusion Review forms part of ÉLAN RDC's 2015 GESI Action Plan to bolster its gender mainstreaming efforts across the program in line with its commitment to facilitating Women's Economic Empowerment through market system change.	ÉLAN RDC
ÉLAN RDC II GESI Strategy (2020)	This strategy describes how ÉLAN 2 will contribute to greater GESI in the DRC focusing on facilitating positive role changes for women within the program's target sectors.	ÉLAN RDC
GESI Guidance and Tools (2020)	This manual is meant to equip ÉLAN 2 staff with the knowledge, skills and tools to identify, design, implement, and measure more inclusive intervention through the use of strategic market information and the development of business cases with strong GESI considerations.	ÉLAN RDC
PRISMA Gender Strategy	This strategy outlines how PRIMSA ensures that increases in income and productivity stimulated by the Activity are inclusive of and benefit women and to a limited extent, youth. This strategy aims to provide practical guidance to PRIMSA's staff and management.	PRISMA
DYNAMIC Theory of Change	DYNAMIC's succinct theory of change articulates how MSD and youth development intersect and improve access to economic opportunity.	DYNAMIC
RDC Gender Strategy	This strategy is meant for use by RDC staff, partners, and collaborating market actors as a guide through the evolution of the organization's gender approach, women's constraints and opportunities in the Activity's context, gender integration priorities, and team members' responsibilities.	RDC
Feed the Future Inova Findings from a Qualitative Study on Gender Norms in Farming, Input Use, and Distribution in Manica Province (2018)	This study summarizes key findings from the Qualitative Study on Gender Norms in Farming, Input Use, and Distribution in Manica Province (Mozambique) undertaken by Feed the Future Inova. It maps out men's and women's roles and responsibilities in farming and, particularly, the input distribution market system; and provides analysis on women as buyers and users of inputs in terms of understanding the information flows, norms, and incentives driving women's	FTF Inova

RESOURCE NAME	DESCRIPTION	ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY
	preferences, household decision making around inputs, and the implications for marketing and sales strategies of input distributors. See the infographic produced by Feed the Future Inova in the Implementation Resources below.	
Feed the Future Naatal Mbay Project Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy	This WEE strategy aims to present the means to address gender issues, empower women, and avoid project activities that could inadvertently either directly or indirectly cause harm to women. The strategy was developed using a data-driven (evidence-based) value chain approach by prioritized value chains and intervention strategies on the basis of the extent and nature of women's participation in each value chain, financial returns to production, and the current and potential role of crop in women's incomes and household food security.	Naatal Mbay

IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

RESOURCE NAME	DESCRIPTION	ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY
Technical Brief: A Facilitation Approach to Youth Workforce Development and Entrepreneurship	This brief describes the facilitated activities YLA has implemented to build relationships among youth, prospective employers, service providers, and education institutions to create meaningful employment linkages and skills development.	YLA
ÉLAN RDC's Women's Economic Empowerment Learning Series: Case Study 1	This case study aims to test the theory that by engaging poor women on the same terms as men as out-growers in cash crop industries, commercial farms can benefit from increased yield and improved supply chain reliability; and poor women can increase their incomes and adopt "more beneficial roles" within the market system.	ÉLAN RDC
ÉLAN RDC's Women's Economic Empowerment Learning Series: Case Study 2	This learning document describes tactics to target women as consumers, marketing "women-friendly" products and reducing women's unpaid care burden.	ÉLAN RDC
GESI Champion Model	This concept note details the rationale for and operational aspects of implementing a GESI Champion Model within the ÉLAN RDC program.	ÉLAN RDC
Working with the Private Sector to Empower Women: What to Measure and How to Build the Business Case for Change	This AWEF Practitioner Learning Brief provides a practical framework for development actors on how to develop a robust business case for private sector companies on the commercial value of empowering women.	AWEF

RESOURCE NAME	DESCRIPTION	ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY
Working with the Private Sector to Empower Women: How YOU Can Build a Business Case for Change	This blog post describes the steps to take to develop a business case for women.	AWEF
Making Digital Finance Work for Women in the MENA Region: Eight Lessons from the Field	This Practitioners Learning Brief explores opportunities and challenges to women's financial inclusion and empowerment. It showcases 14 case studies from AWEF and other organizations working in the Middle East and North Africa region, including eight key lessons on how to design and implement intervention that can pave the way for women's digital financial empowerment.	AWEF
Expanding the Agri-inputs market by targeting female farmers	This infographic developed by MarketShare Associates is meant to present the business case for female farmer inclusion in the agri-inputs markets. By better understanding women consumers' preferences, input distributors can better deliver products and services tailored to their needs.	FTF Inova
Business Case: Engaging Women in Agricultural Market Systems	This business case study aims to understand the specific roles of women in the RDC sectors, detect the cases where companies have engaged women and leveraged their roles effectively, and pinpoint firms' barriers or perceived barriers to women's involvement.	RDC
Partner Assessment Tool for gender inclusion	This assessment tool includes questions and a framework to determine whether partners are selected appropriate to facilitate gender inclusion.	RDC
Market Actor Agreement Assessment Tool	This market actor assessment tool consists of a series of questions meant to indicate how strongly market actors can accommodate gender within the agreement, and to guide gender integration in partner co-creation processes. This includes evaluating the commercial incentive, feasibility, scale, and sustainability of integrating women within proposals.	RDC
Deal Making and Relationship Management Guidelines for Private-Sector Partners	These guidelines are to provide practical guidance on engaging private-sector partners, including the tools and confidence to facilitate win-win negotiations and ensure strong relationship management, Including the will/skill matrix referred to in Case Study IV.	PRISMA (AIP-RURAL)

ADAPTATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES

RESOURCE NAME	DESCRIPTION	ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY
Gender-responsive agri-business models in Northern Uganda	This short fact sheet summarizes RAIN's "gender journey," describing the adaptations required to better address gender after poor initial outcomes. The document discusses the Activity's	RAIN

RESOURCE NAME	DESCRIPTION	ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY
	improved gender responsiveness through appropriate staffing and sourcing additional gender resources for impact.	
Confronting Organisational Challenges to Mainstreaming Women's Economic Empowerment in Market Systems Development Programs	This case study shares insights to existing guidance on WEE in MSD by (1) examining widespread challenges to effective WEE mainstreaming in MSD programs, and (2) providing examples of how the Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Rural Economic Development has tackled some of these challenges. The paper starts from the perspective that the organizational ethos and supporting materials do not embody principles and tools of WEE.	PRISMA

MEL RESOURCES

RESOURCE NAME	DESCRIPTION	ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY
Beyond Income – A critical analysis of agency measurement in economic programming	This comprehensive framework lays the foundations for tool development, allowing projects to measure women's agency in a range of contexts.	MDF
Methodology for Measuring Progression in Women's Roles (2017)	This measurement methodology describes ÉLAN RDC log-frame indicators at output and outcome level focused on the progression of women's roles within market systems.	ÉLAN RDC
Finding the Best Fit	This case study describes how Naatal Mbay's overall approach to digital integration and, specifically, its experience introducing various digital tools and approaches. It reviews the impact of digital tools on Naatal Mbay's partners and targeted value chains, and offers lessons learned about its digital integration experience drawn from the reflections of various stakeholders.	Naatal Mbay

ANNEX 3: ADDITIONAL LEARNING QUESTIONS

AREA	LEARNING QUESTIONS
Mainstream vs. targeted approaches to market integration	• Comparative analysis of mainstreamed vs. targeted projects in the agriculture sector, with regards to (1) the range of impacts of youth in terms of the domains of positive youth development (assets, agency, contribution, and enabling environment) and (2) the consideration of gender • Improving understanding of what each type of inclusion strategy offers to women and/or youth
Youth in MSD	• Are there components of MSD all youth entrepreneurship and employment programs should adopt? • Are young adolescents served by MSD? What are the bare minimum requirements to be able to safely participate in these types of programs? • To what extent do standard WEE tools and measurement frameworks translate to young women in MSD? What special considerations are needed, if any?
Tools for MSD	• Tensions exist in the development of results chains for MSD—with limited space, how much real estate, if any, should be reserved for youth and women? • What best practices/models exist? • To what extent are MSD programs getting to root causes of women's and youth's exclusion? • To what extent do planning tools for women and youth identify ways to drive systemic change across sectors for women and youth as opposed to targeted changes within specific sectors and functions within those sectors? • What tools have been developed for activities at different steps along the project cycle that can be shared, such as youth- and gender-focused market analyses?
Direct delivery vs. facilitation in MSD	• What type of challenges cannot be bridged through facilitation and why? Where does high-intensity facilitation or even direct delivery make sense? • To what extent is mainstreamed gender and youth inclusion in MSD an effective means to address social norms? What are the preconditions for partners to be successful at undertaking this type of challenge?
Staffing for inclusion in MSD	• What is the best way to get staff up to speed with youth and gender inclusion? Who is best suited to this work (business or gender/youth staff)? • What gaps can "making gender and youth everyone's business" provoke? Can this growing practice be standardized and optimized? • What is the optimal way to assign responsibility for gender? Where are experts needed? How much can lay staff be expected to do? • What are some effective staff structure models and what are the factors that should be considered when deciding what model works best for a particular context? CLA mindset does not explicitly call out gender or inclusion. Why not? What are the steps to change this?

AREA	LEARNING QUESTIONS
Social norms	• How and to what extent do MSD programs put stock in exploring gender- and age-related norms, and designing interventions to confront them? • How successful are social norms approaches at affecting systemic change in markets for women and/or youth?
End-market-oriented and demand-driven approaches to inclusion in MSD	• Are demand-driven approaches alone enough to facilitate active inclusion of women and/or youth in market systems? • If so, what are the right ingredients for success (e.g., analytical tools, implementation approaches, staffing, etc.)?
Partner engagement	• What tactics are the most impactful in getting market actors to drive inclusion within a sector by adopting more inclusive business attitudes and behaviors? • Can lead firms' adoption of more inclusive business attitudes and behaviors have spillover effects within the sector? • Do joint partnerships yield better results than single-actor ones? • What are market actors perspectives of the support, incentives and long-term outcomes of participating in an inclusive MSD Activity?
Combination of MSD tactics	• What kinds of opportunities and constraints have been identified and what patterns are seen across cases? • What combination of MSD tactics contributes the most to women's and youth's inclusion in different contexts and opportunity spaces? How do these tactics drive scalable and sustainable change?
MEL	• What MEL tools/resources are particularly effective for supporting MSD projects to conduct gender-/youth-sensitive formative research? What tools/resources are effective for supporting assessing the contribution of MSD tactics to changes in women's or youth's participation or benefit? What tools/resources are effective for measuring systemic changes that include gender/youth impacts? • What MSD market analysis, measurement tools, or program frameworks integrate youth and/or gender lenses? What can be learned from them and what are promising practices in this space?
Donor considerations	• Do current USAID institutional requirements, set up for traditional development programming, meet the challenge of innovation and dynamism women- and youth-inclusive MSD requires?