

Intervention challenges

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Lack of access to market information

A key challenge often seen by market systems development practitioners is that of ‘information asymmetries’: a situation where customers lack information on the products and services available as well as their prices, while investors, service and product suppliers lack information about demand for their product, particularly among poor populations. This can lead to exploitative situations that tend to benefit the relatively rich and powerful and do not adequately serve the poor. For example, this may be the cash is land tenure systems, where farmers have limited information on how much land is supposed to cost or whether or not land is even for sale.

Making Information Systems Work for the Poor: The case of media

A detailed look at the market systems approach as applied to media.

Approaches taken by market systems programmes to address such information asymmetries have focused on improving access to information for the poor in a sustainable manner through influencing media, promoting new information products, and integrating information provision into innovative business models. Specific tactics have included:

1. **Organising public-private partnerships for information systems.** These are usually aimed at sellers of products, such as farmers or banks and local government. Tactics may include collecting, collating and dissemination of information on commodity prices at different points of sale, weather forecasts, product demand etc. (See [Stakeholder coordination](#) for more on this type of approach).

2. **Mandating guidelines for consumer protection.** This usually includes working with regulators and policymakers to raise awareness of the need for such guidelines, and to facilitate the development and enforcement of these guidelines, which usually include certain information to be provided to consumers at and after sale.
3. **Supporting profitable media distribution models to improve the quality and frequency of information provision.** Facilitators using this tactic focus on the potential for ongoing content generation and relevance of the issue to large portions of the population.
4. **Embedding provision of advice and information in other interventions.** This could include encouraging partners to proactively provide advice based on customer preferences along with improving the products and services offered by the business. (See [Technical capacity building](#) for more).

Facilitating client protection, financial literacy, and consumer awareness

Learnings from ESAF's work to strengthen consumer protection and financial literacy in the West Bank and Gaza.

Information in Alliances

Results from the Lesser Caucasus Programme on improving access to agricultural information.