

Learning Agenda

Through our consultation process with the market systems community, we heard that practitioners often struggle to find certain information or knowledge, or even realise it is available to them.

The BEAM Exchange learning agenda aims to address this by ensuring that our guidance and knowledge sharing cover many of the problem areas identified. This learning agenda is a living document, which we will update continuously as we receive feedback from the community. The learning needs shown below refer to the overarching themes highlighted by practitioners. The subsequent community questions provide a selection of potential specific issues that BEAM may focus on.

For the BEAM learning agenda to succeed, it is essential that it reflects and responds to the real knowledge needs of the market systems community. If you have any thoughts or feedback on our current learning agenda, or would like to suggest new areas for BEAM to focus on, please contact us via the [BEAM Exchange website](#).

Programme strategy and design

Learning needs:

1. Problem diagnosis and programme vision.
2. Strategies for working with labour markets to create jobs.
3. Guidance on how to benefit women and marginalised populations.

Community questions:

- How can I define and identify objectives or opportunities for poverty reduction?
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- Which current market systems programmes are empowering women, or other vulnerable communities, through economic growth?
- How can I apply a systems approach to labour markets?
- How do I design a programme to create jobs successfully and sustainably?
- What criteria should I use to select and compare market systems for poverty impact?

Management challenges

Learning needs:

1. An operational guidance 'manual' for managers.
2. Guidance from peers on how to overcome bureaucratic environments.
3. Creating a culture of facilitation and entrepreneurialism.
4. Advice on incentives for learning, and managing/monitoring interventions.

Community questions:

- How can I use an adaptive management approach to programmes within the constraints of bureaucratic aid agency rules and procedures?

- How can I create an entrepreneurial, exploratory culture among programme teams?
- How can I best build my programme team's skill, understanding and practice of 'facilitation' methods?
- How do I create incentives for learning and knowledge sharing about market-systems development – for my programme team and other stakeholders?
- What processes are needed to ensure programmes and the wider community do learn from success and failure?
- How should I manage on-going interventions, and determine or end failed interventions?
- How can I respond quickly to changes my market or operating environment – and improve results based on monitoring?

Intervention design and practice

Learning needs:

1. How to assess markets for intervention design.
2. Designing interventions that align a programme's social objectives with business incentives.
3. Guidance on engaging and negotiating with the private sector.
4. Advice on moving from pilot to scaled-up interventions.

Community questions:

- How much analysis should I carry out into the causes of market failure, and which tools and guidance will help me to make the right decisions?
- What rules of thumb (heuristics) and typical success strategies are emerging as 'good practice' in the market systems that have most frequently been the subject of interventions?
- What lessons are emerging from experiences of how to engage the interest of businesses?
- What is good practice for designing, negotiating and contracting 'deals' that share risks and costs appropriately?
- What are the common challenges faced by programmes moving from pilot to scale-up?
- How do I 'crowd in' other players and functions into the market system – and change market rules and norms?

Innovation: extending the application

Learning needs:

1. How to extend a market systems approach beyond its established use (eg upgrading productive value chains).
2. How to apply market-systems thinking in 'non-traditional' sectors.
3. Guidance on the relevance of market systems approaches to social investment finance.
4. Examples of how to influence policy and practice in non-traditional sectors.

Community questions:

- How can I use systems analysis and interventions in sectors outside the 'traditional' value-chain or M4P programme domains, eg in the health sector?
- What innovations are taking place and what lessons are being learned in specific sectors?
- How can market system perspectives connect with the needs of the growing 'impact investment' sector?

- What evidence, information and guidance are needed to encourage and support application of market system approaches in non-traditional sectors?

Evaluation and evidence of impact

Learning needs:

1. Countering perceptions that there is limited evidence of the impact of market systems approaches to confirm value-for-money, or justify an extension of their application into new sectors.
2. Particular evaluation needs relating to measuring attribution, systemic change and VFM/cost-benefit-analysis.
3. Building logframes, determining indicators (and the role of universal indicators), and measuring job creation and women's economic empowerment.
4. More impact evaluations, comparisons with others approaches such as direct delivery, and assessments of programmes several years after they have finished.

Community questions:

- What evidence exists that programmes using market systems approaches are having an enduring impact on poverty?
- What strategies, methods and tools are most effective at evaluating impact of market system approaches?
- How can I use inference techniques to establish plausible assumptions about the poverty impact of changes in a market system?
- What forms of impact evaluation are feasible to create a more robust evidence-base for policy decisions about use of market-system approaches?
- What forms and levels of evidence are considered as credible with different audiences?

Measuring change in systems

Learning needs:

1. Improved tools for defining and measuring change in market systems.
2. Greater consensus about how to identify or measure systemic changes in markets.
3. Good practice for the attribution of results to programmes, and integrating these into management decisions.
4. Clarity on the roles and responsibilities of programme implementers and evaluators.

Community questions:

- How do you define and recognise significant, enduring, pro-poor change in market-systems resulting from the activities of development agencies?
- What methods, indicators and tools are effective and practicable for monitoring or measuring these systemic changes?
- How do you identify and validate assumptions about the attribution of results to programmes – and what options exist to improve plausibility of attribution?
- Where are the dividing lines in terms of accountability between the roles and responsibilities of implementers and evaluators in programmes using market-system approaches?
- How can I better reconcile independent and objective impact measurement with the need for managing implementation in an adaptive and entrepreneurial way?