The good, the bad and the ugly: market systems and the politics of evidence
The impact of market systems programmes

A review of the evidence by Fionn O’Sullivan and Andrew Rylance, presented by Marcus Jenal
Purpose of the review

Based on the BEAM Evidence Map, the review set out to

• Profile and summarise the kinds of evidence available
• Illustrate some of the areas where market systems approaches appear to have ‘worked’
• Review the kinds of scale of impact achieved
• Provide the basis for assessing the validity of the approach
What kind of evidence?

Number of documents, by type

- Case study
- Research report
- Impact evaluation
- Project progress report
- Book chapter
- Journal paper

Number of evidence documents, by sector

- Agriculture
- Multi-sectoral
- Financial services
- Media
- Fishing / aquaculture
- Catering
- Artisan goods
- Water, sanitation and...
- Energy
- Distribution and sales
- Forestry
- Health
What is the evidence about?

Type of results detailed

- Changes at the intervention Level: 66
- Changes at the system level: 34
- Improved access to services, or pro-poor growth: 33
- Poverty reduction: 15
Where is it coming from?

Authorship by internal or external staff

- Produced by the programme: 27%
- Produced by external body: 44%
- Not clearly indicated: 19%
- Produced by programme with external support (or vice versa): 10%
Summarising the evidence

Challenging collection

- Diverse set of documents
- Commissioned and produced for a range of purposes
- Dependent on what has been published
- Few documents represent after-the-event assessments
- Bias towards presenting success
Summarising the evidence

- Aggregate contribution vs. individual compliance
- Collectively a very rich and varied description of what has worked,
- Cover a wide range of contexts

Harvesting diversity
Conclusion

• Convincing examples of systemic impacts occurring in different sectors, countries, contexts
• It is possible to intervene to make markets work better for the poor
• Scope to improve the evidence for market systems initiatives, to further consolidate the positive judgement
Please help us collect more evidence!

Send your evidence documents to:

evidence@beamexchange.org
Does this assessment of the evidence add value to the discussion?

Yes!  No!
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Has your idea of the value of evidence shifted?

Yes!  No!
Further information

Please contact:

Marcus Jenal
marcus.jenal@beamexchange.org

www.beamexchange.org