USAID
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MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT CARTOON-BASED LEARNING TOOLS

TRAINING FACILITATORS' GUIDE

LEO
Leveraging Economic Opportunities

REPORT NO. 25

FEBRUARY, 2016

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Margie Brand of EcoVentures International for ACDI/VOCA with funding from USAID/E3's Leveraging Economic Opportunities (LEO) project.

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DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

USAID's Leveraging Economic Opportunities (LEO) activity supports programming that fosters inclusive growth through markets. Building on USAID's value chain approach, LEO focuses on:

(1) ***a systems approach to markets,*** acknowledging the complex interrelationships among market actors, market and household systems, climate change, nutrition, the policy environment, and sociocultural factors, including poverty and gender; and

(2) ***inclusion,*** recognizing the role that a spectrum of actors—from resource-poor households and small-scale enterprises to larger and more formal firms—play in catalyzing market change and growth that benefits the poor.

Central to inclusive market development is the idea of market facilitation (see text box). Market facilitation, while conceptually easy, can be very difficult to operationalize. Implementing partners often report having limited understanding of how to practically apply market facilitation in their development project[1] contexts. They are frustrated by a lack of examples of concrete tactics, and often struggle with applying key market systems development principles in practice. USAID, through LEO, has therefore invested in practical and easy-to-use tools to build staff capacity in market facilitation, including a cartoon-based learning series for development practitioners. This learning series has been reviewed and tested by multiple projects across the globe.

MARKET FACILITATION

Market facilitation means intervening in a way that stimulates changes in market systems, while avoiding taking a direct role in the system. For example, facilitators may encourage private sector companies to supply inputs to target beneficiaries, rather than providing those inputs directly.

B. PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This training facilitators' guide provides an overview of a set of LEO market development tools that focuses on market facilitation and uses storytelling in the form of storybook comics. These tools are intended to be used with development project staff to build capacity around effective market facilitation strategies and implementation. While the cartoons focus on the agricultural sector, the principles are relevant across sectors. Therefore, while not designed with this intent specifically, the cartoons can be used to educate on the differences between market facilitation and traditional approaches more broadly.

[1] Throughout this guide, "project" is used in the generic sense to refer to donor-funded activities, rather than the USAID-specific definition of this word.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. TRADITIONAL TRAINING METHODS

It is widely recognized that traditional training methodologies are ineffective in changing the mindset and skillset of most youth and adult learners. Yet these tend to permeate most education and training contexts due to a lack of understanding of more effective alternatives.

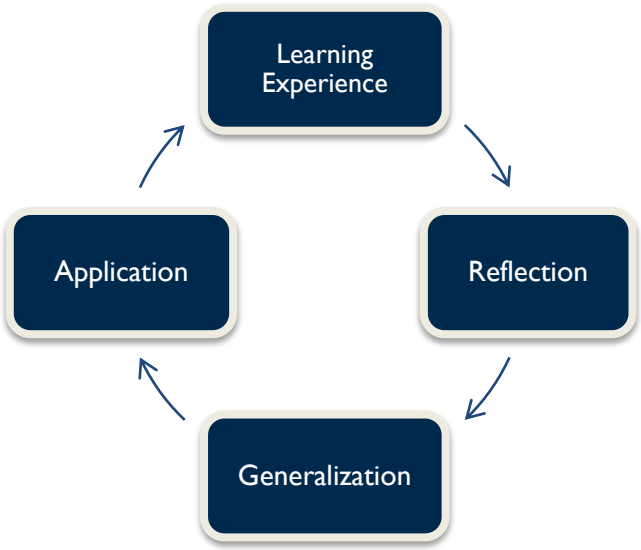
Lengthy lectures cater only for auditory learning styles, which tend to comprise only a minority of learners, often less than 10 percent! Text-heavy manuals are hardly ever read and collect dust on shelves around the globe. Dark rooms filled with overly populated, bright PowerPoint presentations, tend to put most listeners into a sleepy malaise, resulting in very little information being retained. Indeed, most ineffective training tends to focus on giving as much information in as short a time as possible, with very little time spent on stimulating a change in behavior or mindset.

B. NON-TRADITIONAL METHODOLOGIES

Instead of mystifying learning by sharing information that is overly complicated with very little chance of changing and improving behavior, less traditional learning methods demystify concepts and bring on deep-rooted, positive changes in behavior… while learners have fun at the same time.

People tend to learn best by being exposed to what did not work well and internalizing the resulting consequences of bad behavior. People also learn best by comparing different approaches and considering how to adapt these for application in their own contexts. Constant reflection, generalization, and application are key in the cycle to effective experiential learning.[2]

Figure 1: Experiential Learning Cycle



[2] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Experiential_learning for more information on experiential learning.

C. CARTOONS AS A LEARNING METHOD

Cartoons use images and words to tell stories. Whether learners learn best from the images, from the words, or from both, they will still get the message. Cartoons introduce a less traditional learning method that increases focus and energy for learners and reduces boredom.

Cartoons leverage the power of quick, clear messages coupled with the increased probability of retention through visuals and humor. Cartoons can diffuse sensitive topics, allowing more effective and less effective practice to be addressed without creating tension. Cartoons are effective at impacting learners, regardless of age.

CARTOONS
Cartoons describe both stand-alone illustrations—captioned or non-captioned—and short comic strip formats.

Cartoons can, however, be interpreted differently by different genders and ethnic or cultural groups. For this reason the market development learning series cartoons were tested among practitioners in countries across multiple continents and adapted so as not to cause offense or misunderstanding, but rather to offer clear messaging that works across cultures.

PHOTO: DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS EXPLORING HOW TO USE THE CARTOON STORIES AS LEARNING TOOLS

III. OVERVIEW

A. STORYBOOK CARTOON

LEO has designed a practical, fun and experiential learning series comprised of comic-based storybooks. Each depicts and compares different approaches and tactics. The scenarios are based on real-life examples that represent a market development problem and compare different ways of solving it—a market facilitation approach, and a typical, or project-driven, approach. The cartoon learning series allows development practitioners to explore different strategies for improving input supply to smallholder farmers and to strengthen opportunities for smallholder farmers to supply produce to buyers.

CARTOON EXTRACT: EACH CARTOON CONSIDERS A MORE PROJECT-FOCUSED AND A MORE MARKET-FOCUSED APPROACH, RECOGNIZING THAT MOST PROJECTS FALL SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN

B. MEETING THE CHARACTERS

The cartoons are developed around a common set of characters that appear across all the stories related to the market system that they are depicting.

CARTOON EXTRACT: CARTOONS INTRODUCE DIFFERENT MARKET ACTORS, EACH FACING THEIR OWN CHALLENGES

The characters consist of the following:

- Smallholder farmers
- Input suppliers
- Buyers and buyer representatives
- Project staff and project consultants
- Radio hosts
- Networking meeting hosts

The gender of the various market actors varies across stories and even with different groups of characters representing the same type of market actor within a story. In all cases, for the key market actors, the same type of market actors are depicted wearing the same color, as follows:

- Smallholder farmers: green
- Input suppliers: white
- Buyers: orange
- Project staff and consultants: blue

C. STORY OVERVIEWS

Each comic-based storybook is summarized below.

1. INTRODUCING NEW AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES TO SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

Story title: **#1. Catalyzing Adoption**

Scenario: **Adoption of agricultural technologies by smallholder farmers through input supply markets**

Market actors: Smallholder farmers, project staff person, input supply dealer

Summary: This cartoon explores catalyzing adoption in the market system by looking at technology adoption by smallholders as a result of interventions made either directly by the project or via input supply dealers. Even though the story uses input supply firms as an example, the messaging is equally applicable to buyers in output market systems and other market actors.

Technologies are defined as typical agricultural technologies such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, etc.

The cartoon considers the story of two different approaches that could be taken by a project, one scenario taking a more traditional project-focused approach and one taking more of a market facilitation approach.

2. CATALYZING TRUST AND IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS AND BUYERS

Story title: **#2: Catalyzing Trust**

Scenario: **Catalyzing relationships and trust between smallholder farmers and output buyers**

Market actors: Smallholder farmers, project staff person, output buyer, output buyer's representative

Summary: This cartoon explores catalyzing trust in the market system by looking at building trust and relationships between smallholder farmers and output buyers. Even though the story uses output buyer firms as an example, the messaging is equally applicable to inputs dealers in input supply market systems and other market actors.

The cartoon considers the story of two different approaches that could be taken by a project, one scenario taking a more traditional project-focused approach and one taking more of a market facilitation approach.

3. ANALYZING IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES IN BUYER MARKET SYSTEMS

Story title: **#3: Analyzing Implementation Strategies**

Scenario: **Analyzing project implementation activities in output buyer market systems**

Market actors: Smallholder farmers, project staff person, output buyer

Summary: This cartoon considers the activities of projects involved in an output buyer market system and conducts a simple assessment of who the key relationships are formed between, who has ownership of the activities, and the intensity of roles and resources involved.

The cartoon compares the analysis of two different approaches that could be taken by a project, one scenario taking a more traditional project-focused approach and one taking more of a market facilitation approach.

There is also an input supply related cartoon (#4). The messages, for all intents and purposes, mirror each other in both cases.

4. ANALYZING IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES IN INPUT SUPPLY MARKET SYSTEMS

Story title: **#4: Analyzing Implementation Strategies**

Scenario: **Analyzing project implementation activities in input supply market systems**

Market actors: Smallholder farmers, project staff person, input supply dealer

Summary: This cartoon considers the activities of projects involved in an input supply market system and conducts a simple assessment of who the key relationships are formed between, who has ownership of the activities, and the intensity of roles and resources involved. The cartoon considers the analysis of two different approaches that could be taken by a project, one scenario taking a traditional project-focused approach and one a market facilitation approach.

There is also an output buyer related cartoon (#3). The messages, for all intents and purposes, mirror each other in both cases.

5. CONSIDERING RESILIENCE OF THE MARKET SYSTEM

Story title: **#5: Market Resilience**

Scenario: **Analyzing project resilience in output buyer market systems**

Market actors: Smallholder farmers, project staff person, output buyer

Summary: This cartoon introduces a very basic overview of thinking about the resilience of market systems.

The cartoon compares the market resilience of two different approaches that could be taken by a project, one scenario taking a more traditional project-focused approach and one taking more of a market facilitation approach.

6. CONSIDETING SEQUENCING OF ACTIVITIES IN MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

Story title: **#6: Sequencing Activities**

Scenario: **Sequencing of activities in input supply and output buyer market systems**

Market actors: Smallholder farmers, project staff person, input supply dealer, output buyer, output buyer's representative

Summary: This cartoon considers the sequencing of project activities. The cartoon uses examples from both an output buyer market and an input supply market context.

Sequencing is considered for two different types of projects, one taking a more traditional project-focused approach and one a market facilitation approach.

The cartoon breaks each implementation step into (i) introducing activities to market actors, (ii) trying them in the market to see what works best, and (iii) scaling those strategies that seem most successful.

D. WHERE TO ACCESS THE MATERIALS

The cartoons are available in several locations, as listed below. They can be customized as needed, and used in their full form or as discreet pieces. Users should accredit USAID's role in funding the development of these materials.

- Visit www.microlinks.org to search for the cartoons or go directly to https://www.microlinks.org/library/market-systems-development-cartoon-based-learning-tools
- Visit the following links to access online, picture-by-picture versions of the cartoon storybooks that can be scrolled through for easy access on smart phones or smart pads:
  - #1: Catalyzing Adoption: http://ow.ly/SLGKI
  - #2: Catalyzing Trust: http://ow.ly/SLGsv
  - #3: Analyzing Implementation Strategies *(Buyers)*: http://ow.ly/SLH6N
  - #4: Analyzing Implementation Strategies (*Inputs)*: http://ow.ly/SLA3S
  - #5: Market Resilience: http://ow.ly/SLDel
  - #6: Sequencing Activities: http://ow.ly/SLGgV
- Contact EcoVentures International if you have trouble accessing any of the materials through the contact page at www.eco-ventures.org.

IV. LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. LEARNING POINTS BY STORY

Several key market systems development principles and learning points permeate throughout the stories. These include those summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Learning Points for each Story in the Learning Series

Story	Learning Points
#1: Catalyzing Adoption *(Input Supply Market Systems)*	• Introducing new agricultural technologies to smallholder farmers using market systems development approaches • Understanding the difference between project- and market-focused approaches • Self-selection of market actors to work with the project • Invisible subsidies • Facilitating incentives and disincentives Using various strategies, including: • Demonstration plots • Farmer field days • Farmer buying clubs • Competitions between smallholders to showcase best practice and provide new technologies to more successful farmers • Radio to showcase competition winners and best practice • Word-of-mouth marketing tactics • Role-modeling and peer mentoring among smallholder farmers • Text messaging of input product information before each season • Text messaging input product discount coupons and information for most applicable seasonal stock or stock which is about to expire
#2: Catalyzing Trust *(Output Buyer Markets Systems)*	• Establishing linkages between buyers and smallholder farmers using market systems development approaches • Understanding the difference between project- and market-focused approaches • Self-selection of market actors to work with the project • Invisible subsidies • Facilitating incentives and disincentives Using various strategies, including: • Smallholder farmer supplier loyalty clubs • Competitions between smallholders to showcase best practice and provide new technologies to more successful farmers • Radio to showcase best practice among buyers

#3: Analyzing Implementation Strategies *(Output Buyer Markets Systems)*	Analyzing project tactics in output buyer strengthening activities, including: • Who are the key **relationships** between? • Who feels **ownership** of the activities? • What is the level of project **investment** in terms of roles and resources?
#4: Analyzing Implementation Strategies *(Input Supply Market Systems)*	Analyzing project tactics in input supply strengthening activities, including: • Who are the key **relationships** between? • Who feels **ownership** of the activities? • What is the level of project **investment** in terms of roles and resources?
#5: Market Resilience *(Output Buyer Markets Systems)*	• Understanding **resilience** of market systems in terms of how to bounce back from shocks • Understanding **robustness** of market systems in terms of how to take advantage of new opportunities
#6: Sequencing Activities *(Input Supply & Output Buyer Markets Systems)*	Sequencing project activities into three phases: • **Introduce It**: Introducing the activities to the market • **Try It**: Trying out and testing several activities to see how the market responds, which seem most successful, and which need to be adapted or exited • **Scale It**: Scaling the activities to more market actors and/or more regions

CARTOON EXTRACT: THE CARTOONS ANALYZE DIFFERENT MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT TACTICS

CARTOON EXTRACT: THE CARTOONS INTRODUCE WAYS TO SEQUENCE ACTIVITIES IN THE MARKET

V. TRAINING FACILITATION

A. PRACTICAL APPLICATION METHODS & TIPS

The tools can be applied by project managers and staff in formal training contexts, informal project meetings, and even individual learning environments. Project staff can read the cartoons in groups, role-play the stories by bringing in examples from their own experiences, and reorganize the pictures in ways to support their own work plan and causal model design.

1. INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

The cartoon learning series can be distributed to staff to read and reflect on themselves. This is particularly effective with new staff who need a quick orientation to market system development concepts.

PHOTO: LEARNERS REORGANIZE CARTOON COMPONENTS IN A FACILITATORS' TRAINING WORKSHOP OF GLOBAL PRACTITIONERS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

PHOTO: PROJECT STAFF MEMBER ROLE-PLAYS SCENARIOS DEPICTED IN THE CARTOON STORIES USING PAPER MONEY

The cartoon can be distributed to individuals in several formats:

- Printed, hard copy of each applicable cartoon
- Emailed, electronic copy
- Flip-file story format for easy perusal on smartphones and smart pads

2. FACILITATED TRAINING

The cartoon learning series can be used in more structured training or meeting contexts. The cartoons can be effectively used to segue into other more detailed or practical topics. Use the cartoons to:

- **Initiate class discussion and dialogue**: After reading the cartoons, many different discussions could be facilitated. For example, learners can discuss which approach they believe their project is currently taking. (Generally projects do not fall into either category very clearly, but in some grey area in between.)

- **Debate**: Some of the discussions may lend themselves to a more formal debate. Debate facilitators should try not to convey their own position, but should strive for neutrality.

- **Role-playing or simulations**: Role-plays or simulations are one possible venue for having learners act out potential scenarios. Training facilitators could, for example, assign learners with different roles so that they take turns reading out the different characters' conversations.

- **Sequencing activities**: The cartoons can be cut up into individual cartoons pictures and given to teams to sequence, or for example, to identify into two groups: one depicting things they are doing well, and the other, the areas they are struggling with.

Training facilitators should identify what the objectives are for the lesson and the use of the specific cartoon(s). The objective for using a cartoon for a specific topic could either be to promote critical thinking or class discussions on market systems development approaches.

3. FACILITATED PROJECT PLANNING ACTIVITIES

The cartoons can be cut up into individual cartoon slides and reorganized by project teams for project planning purposes, such as:

- Work plan development process
- Monitoring and evaluation planning or design
- Project risk management
- Proposal design

4. PRESENTATION COMPONENTS

Individual cartoon slides can be extracted and used in professional presentations. In this way individual pictures can be used to highlight a specific message in an overall presentation, separate from the cartoon stories.

PHOTO: PROJECT STAFF WORKING THROUGH THE CARTOON STORIES IN BANGLADESH

B. AUDIENCE

The tools can be applied by project managers and staff in any of the following contexts:

- Project staff in general market development or value chain project contexts
- Project administrators or managers based in headquarters and not in the field
- Project teams targeting change in input supply markets
- Project teams targeting change in output buyer markets
- Project teams working on practical work plan design and implementation

The tools can also be useful to anyone trying to understand the differences between market facilitation and traditional approaches, outside of the context of a specific market development project.

The table below shows which stories to use with which audiences.

Table 2. Guide for Matching each Audience Type to the Most Applicable Story

	#1: Catalyzing Adoption	#2: Catalyzing Trust	#3: Analyzing Implementation Strategies *(Buyers)*	#4: Analyzing Implementation Strategies (*Inputs*)	#5: Market Resilience	#6: Sequencing Activities
General market development projects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Project support staff at head quarters	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Inputs-focused projects: general introduction	✓			✓		
Buyer-focused projects: general introduction		✓	✓			
Practical implementation phase						✓

PHOTO: DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS DISCUSS OPTIONS FOR SEQUENCING MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

C. SEQUENCING

Several of the stories have overlapping components. The reason for this is that they are designed for different audiences and/or different stages of project implementation. The table below shows which stories are connected to which other stories and how they overlap, if at all.

Table 3. Summary of how Stories Relate to Each Other

Story	Relationship to other Stories
#1: Catalyzing Adoption	Stand-alone input supply story.
#2: Catalyzing Trust	Stand-alone buyer story.
#3: Analyzing Implementation Strategies *(Buyers)*	Analysis of buyer story. • Should be introduced after stand-alone buyer story.
#4: Analyzing Implementation Strategies *(Inputs)*	Analysis of input supply story. • Should be introduced after stand-alone input supply story.
#5: Market Resilience	Stand-alone resilience story.
#6: Sequencing Activities	Combination of components of stand-alone input supply story and stand-alone buyer story, with additional components showing implementation sequencing. • Can be used instead of stand-alone input supply and buyer stories.

D. TIMING

Application can range from a 30-min short exposure to a particular tool, through to an intense facilitator-led 20-hour training program using all the tools.

E. TRAINING FACILITATION TIPS

Training facilitators introduce participants to the market facilitation storybook cartoon through a process that includes a debriefing discussion. According to the experiential learning cycle, learners need to progress through different phases of the learning process:

- Phase 1: Reflection
- Phase 2: Generalization
- Phase 3: Application

In the case of the cartoon learning series, effective learning requires the ability to form principles based on the learners' reflection and analysis of an experience they had, and in turn to apply the things they learned after they have generalized the learning. Experiential learning requires the active participation of the learner in the learning process. The role of the training facilitator is to help the learner through this process of learning.

1. PHASE: REFLECTING ON THE STORIES

The training facilitator's role is to help the learner reflect on what they noticed or discussed while working through the cartoon. The training facilitator should be sure important aspects of the cartoon and activity are not ignored. An effective way to help the learner reflect is to ask questions about what happened and how the learner reacted. Learners could share their ideas and reactions with each other first and then with the training facilitator as a large group. The training facilitator could use small or large group discussions, participant presentations, or small groups reporting to the larger group.

These are examples of the kind of questions the training facilitator might ask:

- What happened?
- Do you agree/disagree with what they are saying? Why?
- How did you feel when...?
- Did anyone feel differently?
- What did you notice about...?
- Did anyone else feel the same way about that?
- Does anyone else have something to add...?
- Does this surprise you?
- Do you realize that...?
- Why didn't you...?

PHOTO: PROJECT STAFF TAKE TURNS TO READ DIFFERENT MARKET ACTOR ROLES AS THEY ROLE-PLAY THE CARTOON STORIES IN BANGLADESH

2. PHASE: GENERALIZING THE LEARNING

The learners interpret what was discussed during the reflection to determine what lessons can be learned and to draw out key principles. The training facilitator's role is to guide the learner. The training facilitator needs to be knowledgeable about the subject matter and be a credible information source. This does not mean that the training facilitator needs to provide all the answers. In fact, the learners will probably internalize the learning better if they find the answers for themselves. As a guide, the training facilitator helps the learner acknowledge that they have learned something new. There are two basic approaches to doing this: 1) the training facilitator can provide a summary for the learners (as in a lecture or reading assignment) or 2) the training facilitator can ask probing questions that enable the learners to reach their own conclusions (as in a consensus-seeking discussion). The latter approach requires strong training facilitation skills. Notice that the training facilitator uses open-ended questions to stimulate discussion.

Some useful questions the training facilitator might ask include the following:

- What did you learn from this?
- What does this mean to you?
- Is there a guiding principle here?
- How does all that we're talking about fit together?
- Have you gained any new insights about...?
- What are some of the major themes we've seen here?
- Are there any lessons to be learned?

3. PHASE: APPLICATION

In order for the learner to feel that the learning gained from working with the cartoons is significant, the new learning must relate to their own life situation. The learner makes the connection between the learning gained in the training or meeting room setting and the real world—the two are rarely the same.

The training facilitator's primary role is that of a coach to the learner. As the learner considers applying things on her or his own, the training facilitator can provide advice and encourage the learner to try to improve new skills.

Some questions the training facilitator can ask include:

- How would you do your activities or planning differently next time?
- How can you apply this in your situation in real life?
- What do you find most difficult?
- What do you look forward to doing most after working through the cartoons?
- What do you think will be most difficult when you use this approach?
- If you were to do this in your own context, how would you do it differently?
- Do you anticipate any resistance when you return?
- Are there areas you would like to focus on more or get more information about?

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