



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



Brown Bag on Preliminary Lessons Learned of Two Ex-post Studies

5 September 2023



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

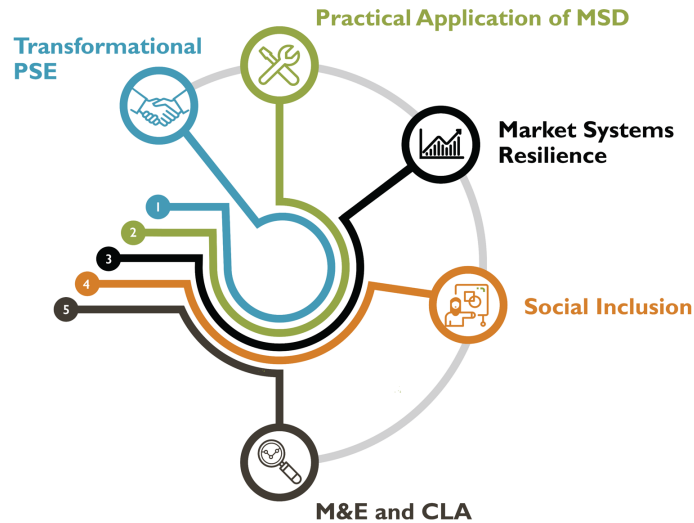
INTRO



Ben Fowler

Co-Founder and CEO

MarketShare Associates



FEED THE FUTURE
The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

LASTING ROOTS: NAATAL MBAY AND THE INTEGRATED FINANCE MODEL IN SENEGAL
Part of the MSP Ex-Post Study Series

FEED THE FUTURE MARKET SYSTEMS AND PARTNERSHIPS ACTIVITY
AUGUST 2023

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

AGENDA

1. Background to MSP and the ex-post studies
2. Brief overview of the Senegal ex-post study*
3. Reflection on key lessons, value add, and implications



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

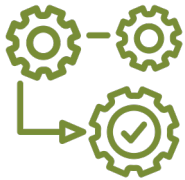


OVERVIEW OF MSP

MSP aims to:



Advance learning and good practice on market systems development and private sector engagement within USAID (Washington and Missions), USAID implementing partners, and market actors.



MSP does this by providing and improving upon the **evidence, capacity, tools, technical assistance, and/or services** required to design, implement, monitor, and/or evaluate activities that lead to **inclusive and resilient agriculture-led economic growth, improved food security and nutrition, and increased incomes for the poor.**





WHAT IS AN EX-POST EVALUATION?



What is an Ex-Post Evaluation?

An ex-post evaluation is defined as a type of evaluation that examines a strategy, project, activity, or intervention at least one year, or several years, after it has ended. It can be used to answer questions about whether and how interventions and/or outcomes are sustained and what factors and contexts help or hinder USAID interventions and sustainable development outcomes.

Source: USAID (2021), Discussion Note: Ex-post Evaluations





CORE OBJECTIVES OF THE EX-POSTS

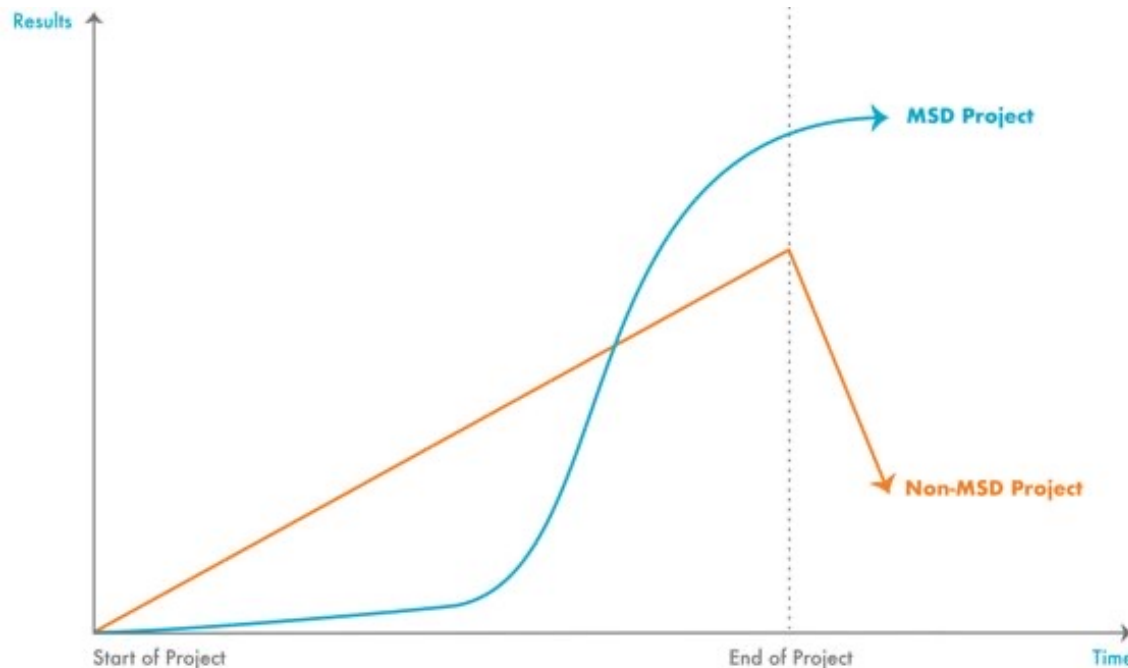


1. Validate if the initiative made **progress to delivering systemic change** and the extent to which any successful change has been sustained and scaled
2. Understand how the systemic change has **influenced how market actors access and deliver relevant 'focus functions'**
3. Investigate if and how the systemic changes have **created benefits for relevant stakeholders**
4. Explore whether and how market systems development approaches were significant in **contributing to the extent of the systemic change and its benefits**





ASSESSING THE MSD “HOCKEY STICK”



- The MSD approach is posited to deliver **more sustainable results at greater scale** than other approaches, but deeper results can be slower to manifest.





FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

FIRST: A RAPID REVIEW OF LESSONS LEARNED ON MSD EX-POSTS



This post is written by Ben Fowler and Benjamin Simmons-Telep. Ben Fowler is co-founder and principal at [MarketShare Associates](#) and the strategic technical advisor for [Feed the Future Market Systems and Partnerships \(MSP\)](#), [Activity Monitoring and Evaluation \(M&E\)](#) and [Collaborating, Learning and Adapting \(CLA\) Learning Stream](#). Benjamin Simmons-Telep is the [Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning \(MEL\)](#) manager for MSP.

Market Systems Development (MSD) is an approach to economic development that is gaining increasing traction within [USAID](#). **However, we must ask ourselves a key question: is its promise of creating more sustainable and scalable impact through deep systems change the reality?**

Evidence to date primarily comes from a program's period of performance (the [Building Effective and Accessible Markets \(BEAM\) Exchange](#), for example, produces an annual [MSD evidence review](#)). However, **the best way to answer this question would be to go back years after an MSD program has ended**

<https://agrilinks.org/post/great-opportunity-and-challenge-msd-ex-posts-4-takeaways-rapid-harvest-insights>



THEN: SELECTING ACTIVITIES

Mandatory Criteria

Closed for between 3-5 years by the time of the study launch

Used features of an MSD approach

Ability to construct a strong theory of change

Available and sufficient monitoring and context data that is shared with MSP

Support of and access to USAID mission and Activity leadership for the ex-post study

Desired Criteria

Activities where there has not been an immediate follow on (at least by USAID)

Ability to inspire interest by Missions and/or other USAID actors in co-funding the ex-post

Other Considerations

Thematic & sectoral relevance

Balance between thin and deep markets

Level of resourcing (both time and \$)





FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

SELECTED EX-POSTS

- The Feed the Future Naatal Mbay Activity in **Senegal** focused on **an integrated financing mechanism. [February 2023]**
- The Feed the Future ADVANCE II Activity in **Ghana** focused on **an outgrower business model. [March 2023]**
- The Feed the Future **Rice and Diversified Crop Activity in Bangladesh. [2024]**
- Plus up to 3 more ex-post studies.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



EX-POST RESEARCH QUESTIONS



What **systemic changes** were the Activity trying to create, to what extent had these changes been achieved when intervention activity stopped, and which of those have been sustained?



Has the **performance of the system's focus functions** been maintained, deteriorated or improved relative to their status at Activity closure?



Have there been **sustained and scaled gains to the ultimate intended target populations** as a result of the systemic changes?



Are there **lessons about approaches to implementation** that can be learned from the sustainability of outcomes (and the reasons why)?

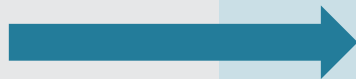


Example Intervention Model of Study: the Integrated Finance Model



Farmer Input Credit

The bank grants credit (in the form of input vouchers) to farmer groups. These loans are secured through **contracts with crop buyers for an agreed volume of crop corresponding to the estimated value of the loan reimbursement**, based on a price negotiated by a committee at harvest. Upon harvest, once agreed upon quantities have been given to the processor, the bank recognizes repayment of the credit, and the farmer groups can request a new credit for the following season.



Lines of Credit for Processors

Upon signing contracts with farmer groups, the bank provides lines of credit to processors. **A collateral management company (herein referred to as third-party holding agent) tracks the quality, volume and value of the crop stocks** being stored in a secured warehouse, ensuring that the value of the inventory covers the balance of the processor's line of credit.



Bank Repayment

Processors enter into contractual agreements with buyers/ wholesalers who purchase agricultural products from them. Once the sale is completed and the **funds are transferred into the processor's account, the payment is applied to the processor's credit balance and the bank is repaid**. The bank then provides approval to the third-party holding company to release the processed product sold for delivery to the buyer.



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

NAATAL MBAY – FOCUS FUNCTIONS

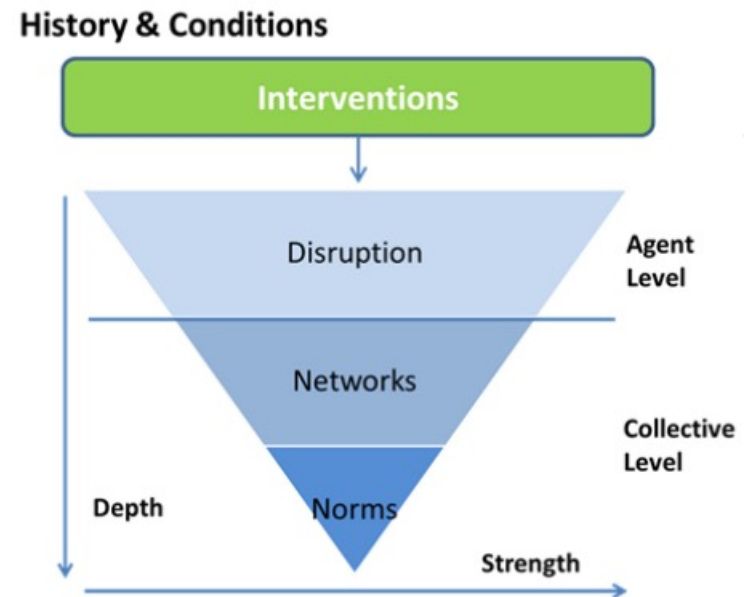


USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

NAATAL MBAY – EX-POST

- For both ex-post studies, MSP used a **mixed-methods approach**, relying more heavily on qualitative research methods (KIIs and FGDs) with key market actors.
- Collected **primary quantitative data** directly from market actors, including production data, loan values, number of loan recipients, etc.
- Used the **Disrupting System Dynamics (DSD) framework** for measuring systemic change to guide the analysis of findings

Disrupting System Dynamics Framework





FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

REFLECTIONS ON CONDUCTING EX- POSTS



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



PRELIMINARY LESSONS: SELECTION



- Cast a wide net to start
- Be wary of having too many criteria...ultimately the selection process may require compromises
- Ideally select Activities that haven't yet closed to work with them on data availability (see next slides)





PRELIMINARY LESSONS: DESIGN 1



- Carefully set the evaluation boundaries by narrowing the focus (such as to a specific intervention model or systemic change) to go deep enough.
- Missions are interested in ex-post findings.
- Adequate upfront preparation is essential.
- Explicitly building in a look at the focus functions of relevance ensured the study went beyond the intervention alone but cannot prompt an examination of everything!
- Using a systems-focused framework to guide the study is critical. The USAID-funded Disrupting System Dynamics framework proved very helpful in identifying and categorizing systemic changes.





PRELIMINARY LESSONS: DESIGN 2



- Consider how changes may be interpreted ex-ante to reduce the risk of confirmation bias.
- Strong relationships with former implementing party staff is essential.
- An ex-post requires developing a storyline for how change happened, at a minimum at Activity launch, Activity closure, and at the time of the ex-post.





PRELIMINARY LESSONS: DATA COLLECTION



- Ex-post research is equivalent to peeling back an onion, so need to use every trick to provide the space for that (e.g., extending the timing of fieldwork, maintaining a budget for further follow-up, keeping flexibility in the research instruments, doing regular reflections throughout the research on findings to date and remaining knowledge gaps).
- Expect data gaps, and to spend oodles of time requesting data, requesting interpretation of the data provided, and requesting explanation of discrepancies in data across providers.
- Establishing trust is key to collecting data without having a strong pre-existing relationship.





PRELIMINARY LESSONS: ANALYSIS



- A validation workshop attended by diverse stakeholders aids greatly in the interpretation of results.
- Studying agricultural value chains three years post-closure means that shocks (e.g., Russia's war in Ukraine, international commodity fluctuations) can completely change the trajectory of the hockey stick! This can frustrate the identification of trends.





POTENTIAL VALUE OF EX-POST STUDIES



- Building the evidence base for the scalability and sustainability of development approaches like the market systems development approach.
- Generating practical lessons for practitioners on what worked.
- As they are done across contexts, they also open up the opportunity for cross-study comparison (e.g., the role of trust in Senegal vs. Ghana).
- Comparing the ex-post results of multiple Activities using different approaches to tackle the same issues.





IMPLICATIONS



- Ensure that the data exist that enable ex-post studies:
 - Requesting permissions during surveying
 - Disaggregating adequately
 - System-level snapshots at Activity closure
 - Structure of the final evaluation
 - Availability and safekeeping of Activity data
 - At a minimum, data from Activity start and end
- Gaps in USAID funding are not always a bad thing when they reduce contamination!





FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

DISCUSSION



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

www.feedthefuture.gov



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

