

Rethinking seed aid through Market-Based Approaches



Housekeeping

- Introduce yourself in the chat (name, organization, country) and answer this Q:
How would you rate your familiarity with using market-based approaches for improving seed security? (New, Moderate, Experienced)
- Only panelists will have microphone and camera abilities
- Please share questions in the chat throughout the presentations
- Slide deck and recording will be shared after via email and posted on www.issdafrica.org and fsnnetwork.org

Today's Agenda

- 1 Welcome
- 2 MBP Framework for seed security
- 3 Case Study: Nigeria
- 4 Reflections, challenges and recommendations
- 5 Q&A



ISSD Africa HDP-Nexus

- How can **emergency seed security interventions** in seed emergencies be more effective, market-oriented, more sustainable and ensure they 'Do No Harm'?
- How can **seed sector development** approaches be tailored to deal with unique challenges found in conflict- and disaster-affected contexts?
- How can seed programmes and governance in conflict-affected better contribute to **positive peace outcomes**?

Enabling partner:



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Implementation partners:



Alliance



WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

Action Learning Project 3

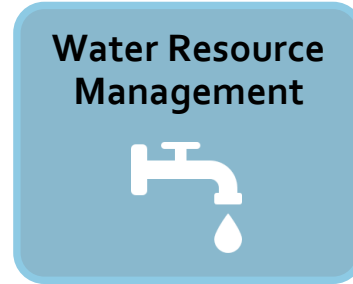
Seed business development in fragile contexts

- What market-based interventions are **most effective in building seed sector performance and resilience** in fragile contexts?
- What **incentives and business models** enable informal and formal private sector seed sector stakeholders to better prepare for and respond to shocks and stresses in fragile contexts?
- www.issdafrica.org



PRO-WASH & SCALE

- Jan 2023 – Feb 2027
- Leads: Save the Children and Mercy Corps
- Team includes agriculture, NRM, market systems & WASH technical advisors
- Collaborates with food security and nutrition programs, focus on emergency
- Capacity strengthening, knowledge sharing, learning capture, collaboration
- <https://fsnnetwork.org/prowashandscale>



Today's Speakers



Sasha Muench

Senior Market
Systems Expert
Independent



Geoffrey Otim

Sr Advisor, Seed Systems
Mercy Corps



John Rachkara

Sr Specialist, Agriculture
Market Systems
AGRA



Shawn McGuire

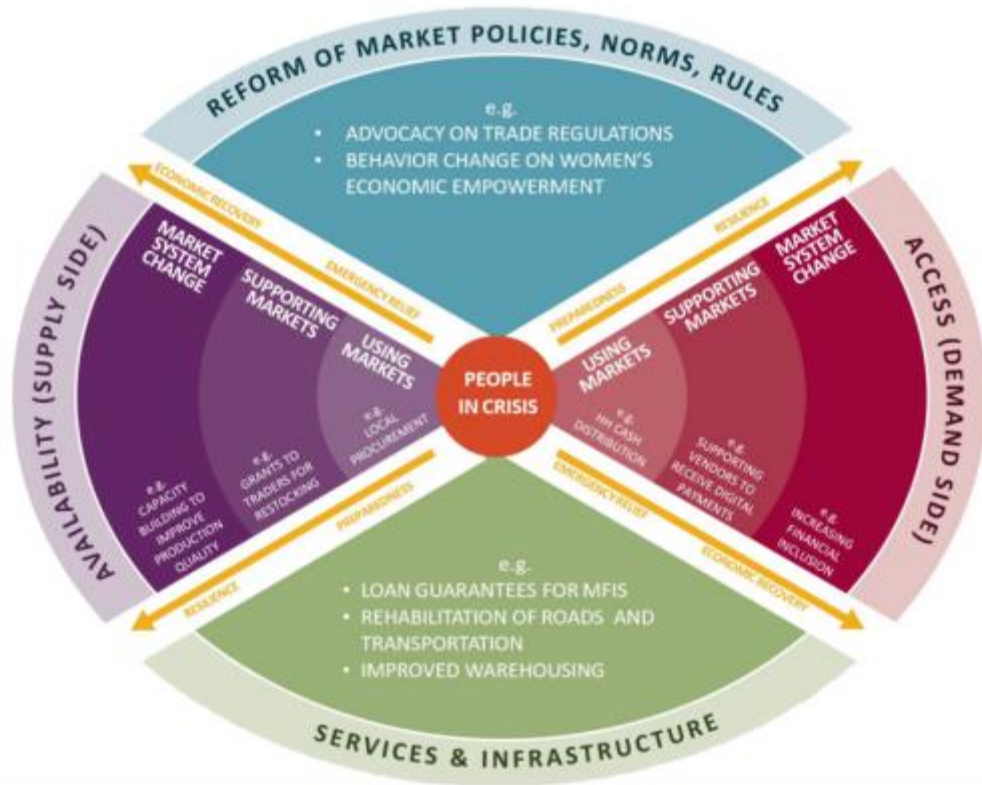
Agricultural Officer, Seed
Security, FAO

The Challenge



- Humanitarian seed aid was designed to be short-term.
- We are now mainly working in contexts with protracted crises.
- Aid can inadvertently undermine local markets and institutions, thus reducing the resilience of the very people we are trying to help.

The Market-Based Programming Framework

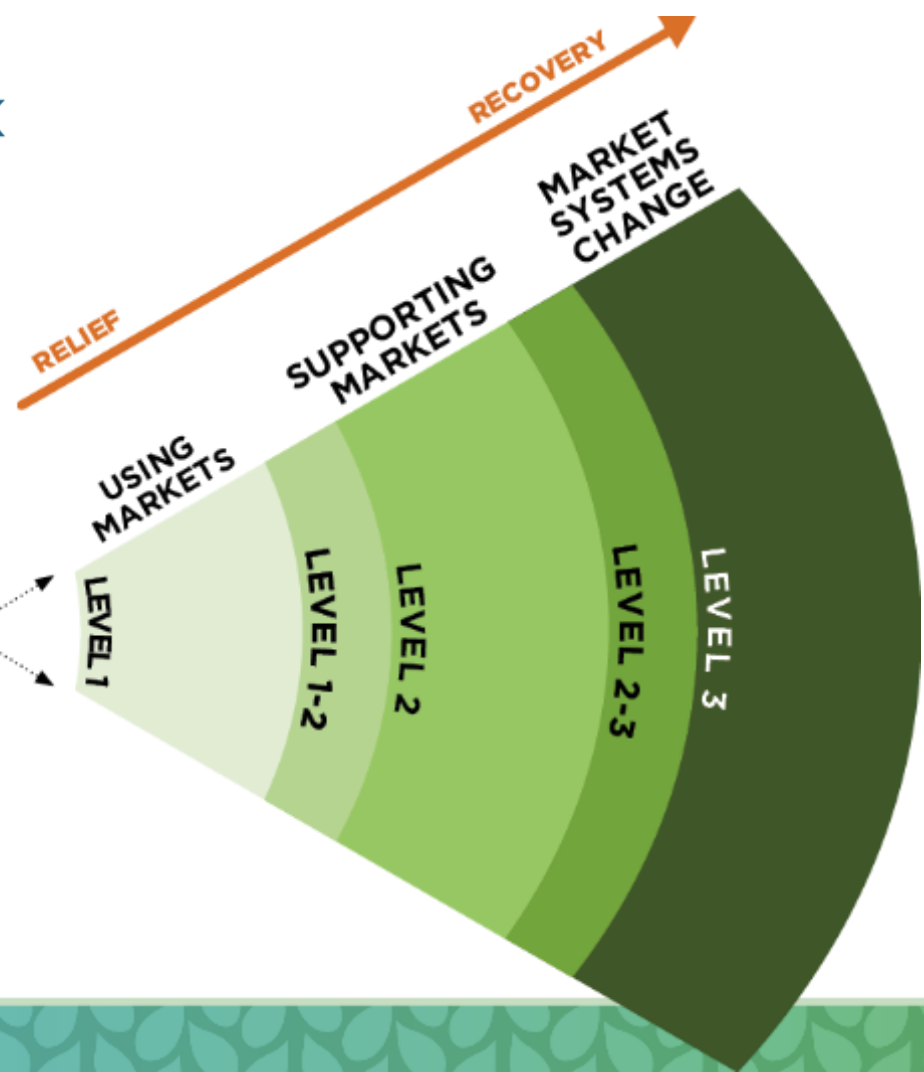
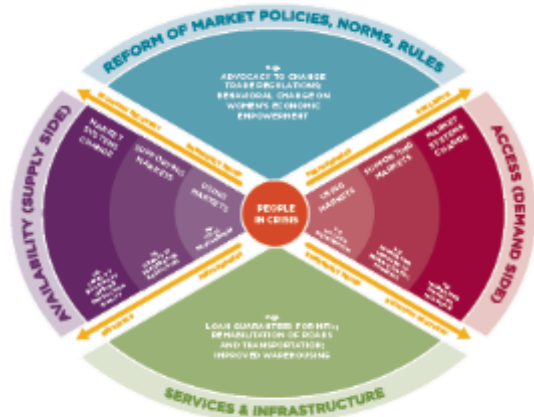


Using Markets to provide essential goods and services, with limited capacity building of the actors themselves.

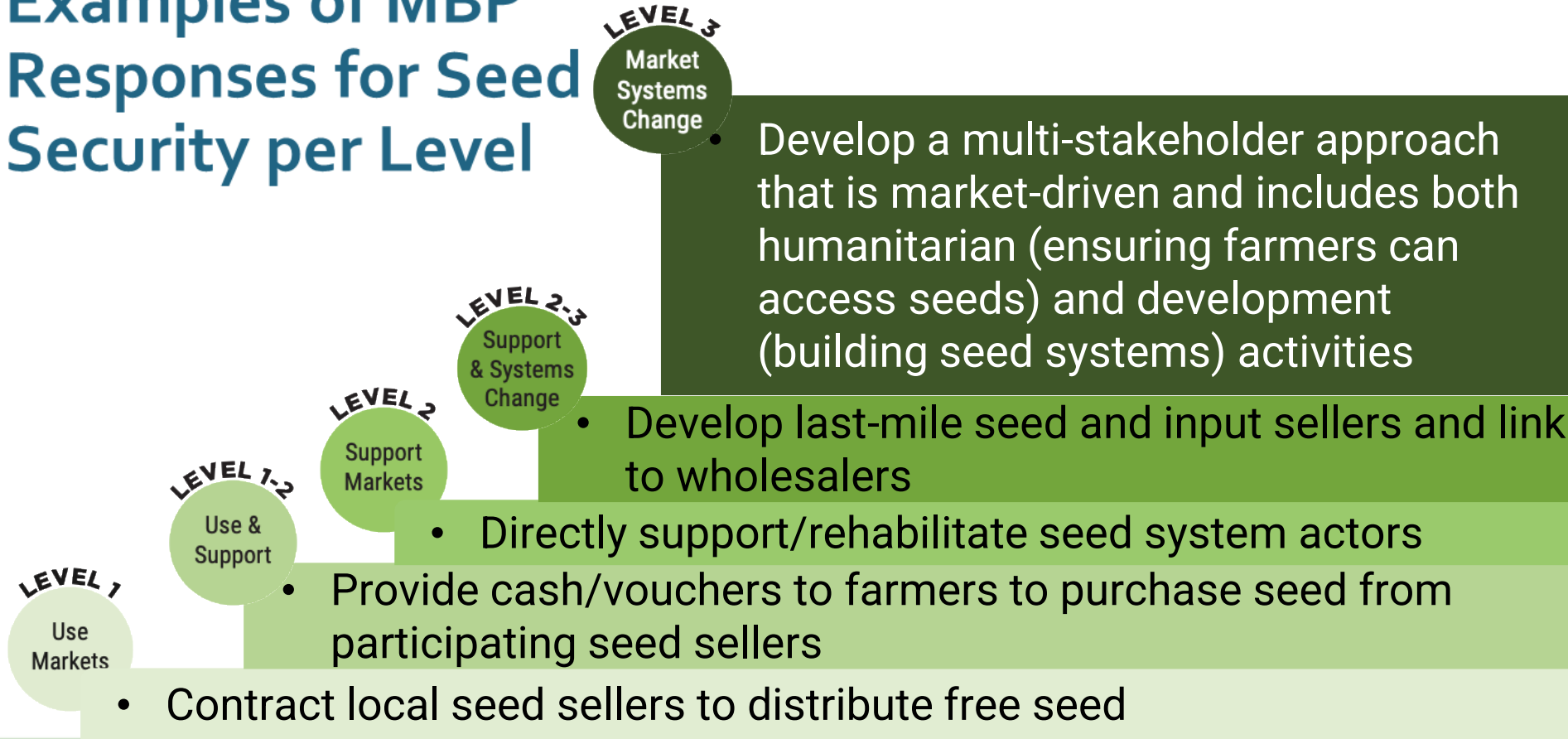
Directly **Supporting Market** actors to ensure the availability of, and access to, essential goods and services, while also strengthening the business (making it better able to respond to the crisis or more resilient in the long run).

Supporting **Market System Change** to ensure the long-term availability of, and access to, essential goods and services through competitive, resilient local systems.

The MBP Framework for Seed Security



Examples of MBP Responses for Seed Security per Level



Applying all 3 Levels: the case of the Nigeria Rural Resilience Activity (RRA)

2019–2025 | USAID-Funded Program, Northeast Nigeria

- Supported economic recovery and growth in vulnerable, conflict-affected areas by leveraging market forces and sustainable business models.
- Reached and positively impacted **900,000 people**.
- Continuously adapted implementation approaches to a shifting post-conflict environment with recurring shocks.



RRA

Level

Examples

LEVEL 3 Market Systems Change

Strengthened both seed supply and farmer demand, increasing smallholder farmer adoption of certified seeds by 40%.

- Built a network of 2000+ village agents linked to seed wholesalers, expanding last-mile access for 700,000 farmers.
- Provided market intelligence to help larger seed companies expand into the NE, resulting in increased private-sector investment and product availability.
- Launched the Nigeria Seed Information Management System, improving access to certified seeds for 100,000+ users.

LEVEL 2 Support Markets

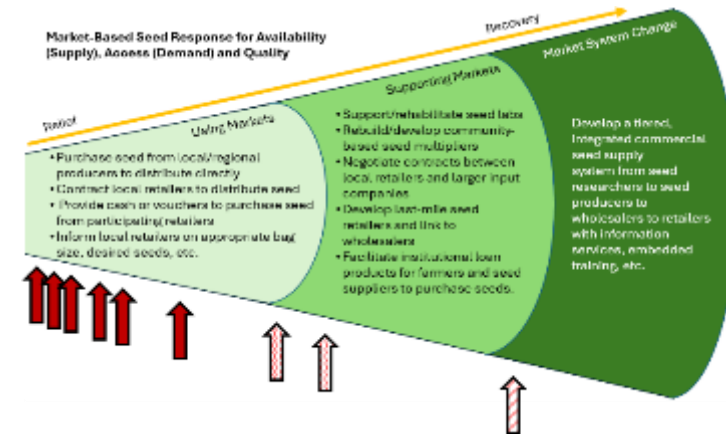
- Increased farmer awareness and demand for improved, climate-adapted seeds through **demo plots, field days, input fairs, and targeted smart subsidies**.
- Enabled 10 seed companies to scale production by **establishing 1,500+ local seed producers and entrepreneurs**, expanding the availability of certified seeds in hard-to-reach areas.

LEVEL 1 Use Markets

- Provided **unconditional cash transfers to 53,000 farmers** during COVID, so they could meet urgent needs without selling assets or consuming seed/grain reserves.
- Provided **grants to seed companies and suppliers**, enabling them to stay afloat through the COVID-related market collapse and continue supplying quality seeds.

Reflections

- Most work at 'using markets' end
- **Challenges:** Time constraints, skills gaps, immediate project goals, partnerships, uncertainty....
- MBP examples in FAO:
 - **Uganda** - positive spillovers with vouchers; market systems as a future goal?
 - **Mozambique** - comprehensive seed sector development - delivery/promotion through diverse market partnerships. Pivot in emergencies?
 - **Afghanistan** - co-creating markets to support emergency-development transition
- **Supporting factors:** 1) linking seed sector development & seed security; 2) engaging state institutions (& mkt actors) for innovation, regulation, scaling; 3) tools (e.g. IDEAS) that provide info for **multiple goals**; 4) **evidence of impact** - production or food security, but possibly also sustained services (and to whom?), resilience?



Challenges

1. **Conducting Integrated Assessments in Fragile Environments**
 2. Timing of Seed Availability
 3. **Seed Quality and Viability**
 4. **Inclusive Private Sector Partnerships**
 5. Transportation Logistics
 6. External Influences
 7. Information Consolidation
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Conducting Integrated Assessments in Fragile Environments

- Hard to balance depth with speed in volatile settings
- Existing tools not a good fit: too technical, slow, incomplete
- Limited expertise --> misidentifying seed constraints

Recommendations:

- Develop practical, standardized tools for rapid joint seed and market systems assessments
- Strengthen humanitarian actors' technical capacity in seed systems and market-based programming

Seed Quality and Viability

- Poor quality/counterfeit seed remains widespread
- Certification & testing = more time, cost, preference for larger companies --> Local sellers excluded
- Limited lab capacity, technical expertise, procurement constraints make quality testing difficult

Recommendations:

- Start (re)building local capacity to produce, test, and sell quality seed while immediate seed needs are being met
- Develop alternative procurement and contracting processes for fragile contexts

Inclusive Private Sector Partnerships

- Procurement requirements favor larger, formal companies
- Engagement with firms is transactional, not genuine partnership
- Risk of market distortion and monopolies
- Local sellers preferred by farmers excluded from programming


Recommendations:

- In the immediate term, utilize cash methodologies to enable farmers to purchase seed from their preferred seed seller(s)
- If direct distribution is necessary, modify tender procedures to enable smaller local companies to participate



Discussion

ISSD Next Steps

- Explore and promote/develop rapid joint seed–market assessment tool
 - Share upcoming training opportunities and learning cohorts
 - Surface practical models for seed quality assurance
 - Deepen understanding of private sector roles in crisis settings
 - Improve consolidation and accessibility of seed and market system resources
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More Resources & Ways to Engage

- [10P, CAT, SERT, SSSA course](#)
(all co-developed with [SeedSystem](#))
- [ISSD Africa](#)
- [PRO-WASH & SCALE](#)
- [Markets in Crises \(MiC\)](#)
- [BEAM Exchange](#)
- Email: Geoffrey Otim
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