

## **Transcript from Marketlinks Webinar: “Engaging the Private Sector in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Environments: Lessons from Haiti and Eastern Congo”**

*Wednesday, October 27, 2021 at 9:00am ET*

Thank you so much for joining us today.

We will begin our session momentarily.

We still have some time.

But in the meantime.

Do invite you to go ahead and activate that chat sidebar by clicking on the chat icon at the bottom of your screen and do share with us your organization and where you're joining from today.

At anytime throughout today's session, you may type into this chat and we can respond and support you directly into there.

We do ask that you stay on mute throughout this session. The new icon is located on the bottom left of your screen. If you cannot find it, we will be able to mute it for you. And our presenters, the only ones with their videos in able for this session.

Finally, you have two options to access the closed captioning for today's session. You can click the link on the screen, or you can go to the more buttons at the bottom of your screen and click Closed Captioning or subtitles. And that will enable closed captioning for you for the session.

Good morning. Good afternoon.

Your name where you're joining us from in which organization thank you for continuing to share where you're from and what organization you're joining us from.

Delighted to have you with us. We're going to allow a few more minutes for others to join us today.

So in the meantime, we're going to launch a few polls for you to respond to as you join in on this session.

All right. My friends. Thank you so much for joining us today. We do ask that you maintain your own mute button as you are joining us.

And we will invite you to go ahead and enter your inputs into those two polls that you see on the screen. How would you describe your role? And then also, how would you rate your familiarity and your experience with PSE.

We are just delighted to have you join us today. Hello and welcome. Friends for those of you who are just joining us, please do go ahead and share your organization and where you're joining us into the chat today also have a couple of polls for you to respond to that should be open on your screen jack.

Welcome everyone. I'm just enjoying reading where everyone's joining us from today. Thank you for sharing both your organization and where you're located. It's just wonderful to have you in this virtual space today.

We have a couple opportunities for engagement before we begin this session, we will ask you to not only share where you're joining and your organization into chat, but also, do you reply to those polls that you see on the screen in front of you?

We will begin momentarily.

Thank you, everyone you everyone so much for tuning in progress. We will be recording this session as an opportunity to share the recording afterwards with those who are either unable to attend or who would like to reference it Marketlinks webpage.

Just a kind note that you can always access the closed captioning for today's session by clicking the link on the screen are inputting that link into your web browser. Or you may enable it directly into your Zoom platform. Clicking the more buttons and then enabling closed captioning transcript or subtitles my friends, hello and welcome.

Thank you. So much for joining us today. We are. Going to begin our session today.

So with that, thank you for inputting your name, your organization, where you're joining us from in chat, and also to responding to those welcome poles at any time throughout today's session, you can go ahead and access that chat bar and let us know if you do have any questions for our presenters.

We will begin the session today without with Laura Meissner. She will be our moderator for today's session. Laura is a senior economic recovery and market systems technical advisor.

Seconded by the University of Arizona to support USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

So let's begin this session.

Laura, over to you can everybody hear me?

Yes, we hear you clearly.

[SPEAKER] Excellent.

Thank you.

Good morning. Good evening. Depending on where you're joining us from.

We are so grateful that you've chosen to spend some time learning with partners.

Speaking from USAID, Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance.

As most of you probably know, humanitarian needs have really risen dramatically in recent years. For the year 2021, they're estimated at \$35 billion ... simply cannot keep pace.

At the same time, of course, the private sector has long been a major source of funding for and the engine of job growth. Official government assistance in some countries is just too warped by private flows. And about 90 percent of jobs in the developing world are created by the private sector. USAID

and other donors needed to find ways to close that gap between needs and available funds. And partnering with the private sector to adopt context sensitive, market-based approaches. Scaling for impact and then support innovation is one way to do this. This kind of course, be particularly tricky and fragile. And conflict affected environment where markets. And lots of market information, challenges in infrastructure and technology.

Devin challenges and more pose barriers to taking up these approaches.

So we're very lucky to be joined today by representatives from two agencies supported by USAID. The Pan-American Development Foundation in Haiti. And Asili, which is a partnership between a [inaudible] formerly known as the American Refugee Committee and Eastern Congo Initiative, especially enterprise.

If you would like to learn more after today about how to engage the private sector. In such context.

I'm pleased to announce that USAID earlier this month released a primer on how to do just that through the Feed the Future Market Systems and Partnerships activity. And then formed by experiences from the, among other parts of USAID. You can find it at showing on your screen.

Now, I would like to introduce our speakers. Our first presenter today will be joining us. From the Eastern Congo Initiative. They are Tad Luden and Valéry Namuto, the project manager that manages every aspect of the field operations from day-to-day.

He coordinates the entire enterprise from counting cash at what it points to negotiating rights away with local leaders. He is renowned throughout the country for as a pianist and composer, including playing for the President in Kinshasa. He lives and works in a city he loves for its culture and its art deco architecture.

Can direct the design, development, and operation of services and products, which over a 120 thousand people every day. He leaves the development of a social enterprise, providing water and health facilities in Eastern Congo, has been working there since 2014 when he joins a light for just a few months.

We will also hear from Sowmya Krishnamoorthy who is the Director of Partnerships and Sustainable Finance with PADF.

She joined them in 2014 and their Port-au-Prince office.

And she now oversees private sector partnerships and sustainable finance investments for all of PAADS she has experienced in entrepreneurship, Workforce Training, Notebook governance.

Environmental sustainability, and disaster response as well as innovative financing, local enterprise development, Public Private Partnership, value chain development, and promoting market-based approaches.

She previously worked at the Fortune Magazine groups for telling me at the Clinton Bush Haiti.

And she has a bachelor's degree from Hollins University and a law degree from Duke University.

She will also be joined by Cedrelle Jean Louis. Louis, who's PADF country director doing PADF in 2014 as well. She's a senior executive with over 25 years of financial and ministry and organizational development experience. She has worked on everything from startup operations, change management,

developing financial systems, security assessment, and policy. She holds an MBA from eastern University and a bachelor's degrees in the institute ... .

If you have any questions during.

We would ask that you please write them in the main chat box.

We are allowing plenty of time.

During this webinar to address them during the Q&A portion?

I would now like to hand it over to Tad and really to get us started.

Thank you.

[SPEAKER] All right.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to speak to everybody today.

Really.

How, solutions and be applying them to this new kind of geographies and demography is true.

Create outcome for everybody.

Now using business as the way forward on that.

So if we go to the next slide, please.

Great.

Thank you.

Sorry my internet is a little bit unstable, so I shut off my video.

But really what we're trying to do with Asili is to take the notion of aid and see how do we start to you.

That to reinvent aid and transform it into start-up capital for businesses.

And so the idea really is, I think something that we all are kind of this cycle of when there is a big crisis or there is a big shock that comes into a place.

A lot of humanitarian aid will flow.

When things will start to stabilize.

And then there'll be a slow transition into development work.

Sometimes and so what we want to tailor the beginning, and let's really think with the end in mind of how do you use one of these crises as an opportunity to start building up systems and infrastructure and enterprises and put those into place.

So that then you can.

Create ongoing support and service delivery models that continue to work for customers.

During times of crisis.

But also as the transition out of crisis and into development.

So how do we really span that gap?

And so for us, the number one way that we did that was.

We really wanted to say, okay, let's take that philanthropic investment.

Let's put that into building out the infrastructure.

And if we kind of erased that from the balance sheet, it allowed us to then focus in on specifically the operational costs, which allowed us to then be a much more affordable.

For our customers.

While also ensuring that we had higher levels of quality and value is going to talk a little bit about the approach on that.

[SPEAKER] Thank you Tad.

Yes.

Then October three prints and nation by that.

So the approaches to see now where to start and how do we need by, want to start?

So we choose that you meant human centered design and was a process we use to implement the program.

We meet several communities in the program and see what is the real need on the ground.

And to learn about what support we can give to the community.

And then during those.

Sessions with a community, we found that.

The real need was in health care, and access to water and economic growth.

So the question was, okay, if we can start by those three components, how do we implement them and how do we create some kind of different things.

Will last and will be helpful for the community.

And then we choose like doing those activities.

But creating a.

Kind of business model which will have the age to last for long.

Yeah, So next slide, please.

[SPEAKER] So what we've actually ended up doing is taking these businesses that value was mentioning.

So health care, primary health care, and preventative health care, clean water distribution networks.

And then economic growth or economic generation opportunities.

And putting those all together.

And we call a zone.

And so the idea being that those needs that people have within the community, and that if we can kind of pull all of those levers at the same time will create more resilient, healthier, and more economically empowered communities.

And we started that through this iterative model.

And so we currently have six of these zones operating serving about 120 thousand customers every day.

And we're on track to expand into a total of 10 zones to serve 500 thousand customers.

And so you'll see they're largely clustered around the city of Bukavu.

And now what we're doing is really seeing, okay, how do we work?

Also on the management tools and techniques in collaboration with some private sector partners as well, to grow further afield while ensuring that we can maintain quality as we go Please go ahead to the next slide.

You're on mute.

[SPEAKER] I'm sorry.

I was saying as things together, the question.

Was what kind of impact do we expect to have from the community?

And then?

We with us would those three components and we discovered that there was a kind of needed for the community to have a package of services given together.

And then that can.

Part of the community.

We discovered that also on the ground that 19 percent of 95% of the community can have can be able to access to the services.

Because we found that if we can provide those services to 95 of the community.

And those services affordable and accessible and high-quality development that will push the community to kind of being graded to sustain the, the, those activities.

So we also discovered those kind of new components.

As I can say.

The affordable and clean energy, which is a new services we want to put together to add to the existing services so that we can have a package.

And create a membership where the community can have access to those three components of the services on the same.

So that we can have a community more resilient and economically.

Communities.

Next slide, please each co-locate.

[SPEAKER] Those.

Businesses.

So with any seven water pools.

And for us, is also, important [inaudible], and how do we make sure we have stepped they're really members of the community.

Relate to people.

In a way that's going to be translating over to them, right?

So one of the things that we really like within this model is that, you know hi tad, your audio is cutting in and out.

[SPEAKER] Is there any opportunity Velarie we can ask you, please just speak a little to this slide.

I believe we might have lost Tad's audio.

[SPEAKER] I'm back.

Let me try and cut my video that again.

Always fun right with Internet challenges.

One of the main reasons that we chose business is that what we were really doing is seeing how do we make something that's not accountable to the end.

To the donor, but actually to the end-user.

And so what we're able to do is what I would say is one of the few USAID programs, humanitarian programs that has no beneficiaries.

We only have clients.

And as soon as someone becomes a client.

Then you become able to see that in our sales records every week how are people doing?

How are?

People understanding the value that we're bringing to the community and what is their value proposition?

And so?

Within that we've also really put a huge focus on making sure that even though we're a co-creation between different Congress.

Release organizations and US organizations.

And of course, USE idea itself that has many of our staff as possible.

And everyone on the front line is Congolese.

And so currently we've got over a 110 employees, three of which are not Congolese.

But the idea really is as we start to create these jobs, and, within these zones and also give people a consistent, affordable access to these basic services that the quality of life will continue to improve.

Next slide, please.

So you know, all of that sounds great, but we wanted to actually, you know.

[SPEAKER], we've been doing this since 2014 And so we thought it would make sense to share some of the ways that we've really kind of fallen flat on our face.

And the way.

Had to pick ourselves up and iterate and change on the way.

So please go ahead to the next slide [SPEAKER] When it comes to shift from beneficiary clients.

We thought about how do we provide the highest quality of the services because we believe that as soon as talking about.

Kind of client business and other things, and then we thought that we could be bringing from both continental Europe can see the container on the right.

Was prefabricated container.

We brought that container to the community and then.

We knew that as soon as the container we reached the city, i mean the community.

We already start activities and then it's becoming very high level of challenge to bring the container from a boards to the community where we want to serve as.

It was very area.

There was no road for access and it's took longer to bring the container.

And then the other thing is that one, the community was seeing the.

Continue.

They.

Knew that the services will be there for very short term because they.

Found that the container will be moved as it came.

So we start learning from that and realize that each could be very helpful and meaningful, that we can change from the container.

And to build now a real clinic with concrete.

And as you can see.

On the photo, the clinic is in a building.

Community can have access and bring comfortable, bring the community level of being comfortable, and trust, so that they can say 0, we are paying for the service and the service.

Will stay for long.

Next slide, please.

Great.

And just to clarify a few questions.

[SPEAKER], I'm seeing coming into.

These are businesses right?

And so when we talk about clients those are individual families.

Or families or individuals as well as other businesses that are coming to purchase water from the water points.

So when we talked about within the zone, we have seven of those.

What we do is we capture one source and then we build a distribution network that goes throughout a village or several villages.

And now we're actually operating.

An urban and urban areas around the city of ... .

But.

As operating as a business, one, of the things that we really did learn is that if you're trying to do everything and trying to do too much and not specialized.

You'll end up doing nothing for anyone.

And so one of our very early experiences was, you know.

We've talked about how we bring all three of these businesses and at the same time.

And so one of the first experiences that we had within rural markets was selling seeds and fertilizer on credit to farmers, as well as giving them a forward purchase contract.

So then buy the end product of potatoes, Irish potatoes, and turnaround, and then sell those in the city.

So we're kind of an aggregator as well as increasing the inputs there.

And what we ended up realizing is that there's a reason that there's companies that.

Just specialize in agriculture, right?

It's actually very challenging, especially with such a low margins and low levels of data that are available to understand who's going to be a good farmer and who's not.

So one of the very difficult decisions that we had to make was to divest from that agricultural business.

And actually turn that over to more philanthropic based partners that could continue that on.

But now the big lesson for us there was this was still a very important part of our model.

Was to really look around and see, okay, who are the people that have a business that's currently running and?

How do we bring them onto our platform in order to continue that work of increasing the demand within the communities for social services.

And so what we ended up doing was we ended up inviting on companies like Nespresso into communities that were growing coffee.

So that they could purchase the coffee from these communities.

And at the same time, they were funding the infrastructure.

So the cash needs to build out the water system and build out the clinic so that they could also be delivering social services to the farmers at the same time through us.

And so one of the lessons that we've come away with is, you know, really focus in on what your niches.

And then find other people that can collaborate and can complete other partners or other areas that you want to continue to operate in.

So next, next slide, please.

Then.

[SPEAKER] I think one of the bigger challenges, there, are bigger lessons that we've had is that as we're looking at this particular kind of from the outside and seeing what had been happening in Congo for at that point.

20 years of aid flowing in.

Projects coming.

And then, you know, at the end of a project, it was really hard to see the results continuing once the donor financing stopped.

Was that we really had to radically change the way that we thought about standards.

What we ended up doing was creating a very simple standard which was that if it wasn't a service that was good enough for any one of us as employees.

Any one of our donors, whether that be people from USAID, private sector partners.

Anybody really on the face of the planet?

And it wasn't going to be good enough for Congolese communities.

I think that very often times when the humanitarian or development sector, when you're working in a complicated place like Congo, It's easy to let the feasibility challenges right?

Of how hard the operating environment is.

Cloud Division on what is doable.

And so we said a very, very high standard.

And then we challenge ourselves to stick to that day in and day out.

Even during the time of COVID, where our water system continued to operate.

Every.

Single day, even when there was the shutdowns our clinics continued to see patients.

And we're actually despite the economic challenges that came with that, we're able to see an increase in revenue across all the businesses.

And we really think that has to do with this idea of, you, know when you're no longer seeing yourself as a project.

But seeing yourself as an enterprise that exists with to serve the community.

If you're bringing a respect to the community that then they're also echoing back.

And so it's really been this great partnership that we've had with all of the different villages that were operating.

And the city.

That's changed kind of the really changed the face of these areas.

So those are three of our big takeaways from this.

We want to make sure we have plenty of time.

And others, have a lot of great questions.

We want to make sure that we have time for the other partners to talk as well.

So we'll turn it over to you guys.

Thank you so much.

For the opportunity.

Thank you so much.

Tad and We really appreciate it.

Now you're going to turn Eastern Congo with Sonya and figure.

Thank you so much, Laura, and thank you, Tad, and Valéry.

[SPEAKER] You you're a tough act to follow.

Hi, Good morning everyone.

Thank you for joining us today.

I'm just going to be briefly on camera because even though I'm in Washington, DC, I have internet, connectivity, issues as well.

But it is so nice to.

Nice to see all of you.

I'm going to talk today.

What's a drill and I are going to speak today about our experience with private sector engagement in the context of disaster and disaster risk reduction in Haiti.

We wanted to reflect on our contrasting experiences.

Been have when we can.

Take the time to think through private sector engagement, build on relationships which we typically get in a disaster risk reduction program, as opposed to when speed and accuracy are very much writing criteria when we're in post-disaster of context and we're transitioning maybe from relief.

And response to early recovery.

And so I wanted to start us off today.

I don't know about all of you, but my coffee hasn't kicked in and nothing like a good music video from Haiti to get everybody on their feet, right?

So if you don't mind, going to the next slide, please.

And getting us started with.

With the video could we move to the next slide, please.

[SPEAKER] And could be load the video okay.

I guess we can't.

Sorry, I can't do justice.

I can't actually break out in song and dance.

There we go.

Thank you.

So give us just one moment while we pull it over.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you for making that work.

And so I wanted to start us off their to first broaden the idea of private sector engagement.

What you saw in that video from our Disaster Risk Reduction Program.

Upgrade that ran for a few years in the communities of Port-au-Prince.

My son, and then also in the North in one month and I wanted to point that out because the musician, you saw is a famous Haitian musician, [inaudible] and we bonded to broaden the idea of private sector.

It is firms, it is both local firms and national firms.

It's regional firms, it's been international private sector, but it's often also individuals that have a lot of influence and private sector engagements to be truly successful in our experience sits within an ecosystem of partnerships and.

We wanted to just highlight some of the things that different partners bring to the table.

And I'm going to come back to the point about donors pushing us to be more creative in our solutions later on in the presentation.

But that, you know, you need to have the government, you need to have diaspora.

You need to have media companies and sometimes you need to be creative.

And how you think through these partnerships because the fact that we had we had big kind of lead the message delivery and the content around this really upped the reach and we, we just, we just had such a great reception from this video.

So I'm just going.

Point to just put that idea there as the idea of different partnerships and how they'd be in and out has mattered a lot to the success and an impact of our private sector engagement.

Next slide please.

I'm going to shift gears a little bit now to talk about Postmaster.

And I know there are a lot of folks in the audience today who've also participated and, sometimes even lead how, how the donors, implementers responded to Hurricane Matthew.

I'm particularly want to call out Catholic Relief Services.

We worked adjacent.

To them in our work.

But the goal here in this program.

Was to make sure that the most effected families after the hurricane just devastated many parts of the South of Haiti in 2016 to demonstrate that it really mattered what materials were used, what construction techniques were used, because as we all know, the natural contributes, but it's often the faulty construction or the lack of resources and lack of knowledge that leads to devastating impact.

And.

If we took that idea, a safer home to be the center of our focus, we engage the private sector and also the locally ecosystem and in creative.

Ways the first thing was we know, we knew we needed to be very quick in our.

Response and these communities had suffered so much.

So for the very, first time, rather than, doing our traditional assessments which were often having teams down on.

The ground.

We use drones and GPS..

Mapping to sort of do large scale assessments.

And then followed that up with a few more on the ground engineering business that helped us a have a bigger picture and also generated grid interests from local actors as to what activities we were planning to do and that lead directly to engage.

Which engagements with local universities and local technical schools.

We drew upon engineering students.

We paired them up with our own team of engineers.

And we started engaging local builders.

All of that, even at the assessment phase.

The next step for us was making sure that they were higher quality materials that were available.

This is an important point because the local markets, while vibrant and definitely had supply chains and distribution points that we wanted to leverage with simply responding to market conditions on the ground.

These report communities and they weren't demonstrating the purchasing power that was needed for the vendors to stock the.

Because of materials are program of course, came in designed to stimulate some demand around this.

And also awareness and knowledge as to why these things mattered.

But we were distorting the market and we were aware of that.

Going in.

So we chose local vendors carefully.

We introduced, we help them source the materials we wanted them to have in supply for our beneficiaries.

And then we also drew in larger enterprises from Port-au-Prince, particularly we worked with the company called transfer to do vouchers.

So that people could know exactly what materials they were eligible to buy the.

Vendors knew who were, who were able to purchase these materials and knew exactly how much inventory they were going to move.

It gives some certainty to the business operations in the time of great uncertainty and risk.

And then we engage local builders.

Obviously you want to build capacity and knowledge within communities and you also want to build upon.

And their own practices.

You want to see how, what materials they usually go to, what choices they make and how we can work around those choices.

We use the Bachelor's, as I described below, but that also came with some challenges, network connectivity is not always the best the vendors that we.

Chose we had chosen did not have.

Necessarily the equipment needed to process the vouchers.

But we knew that the vouchers were very critical to us because, like I said, we wanted to be fast and our response, we wanted it to be transparent and you wanted to be accountable.

And then one final extra layer that we added in this was entirely thanks to.

The directive and the creativity of the donor, which was USAID.

And often this case, formerly off the now BAHA, was the idea that to really spur recovery, these communities could, could, really, benefit from connections to power.

And as luck would have it, an NGO, a partnership of an international NGO and a local company had started building solar micro grids in some of the communities we were working in.

And the hurricane had obviously cause great damage to the one grid that already built and put on hold.

The other grid that they were working on.

And so we came in to help support rebuilding of the first grid and sharing the second.

Grid was up and running.

And then the connections could be made not just to individual homes, but also to some of the community facilities and infrastructure like street lamps, etc.

So this now by engaging the private sector and then by broadening the notion of the private sector.

So we've talked about local.

Builders.

We've talked about local vendor.

We've talked about suppliers of.

Materials we've talked about and power company off grid.

And we've talked also about a national firm coming into provide some of the backbone infrastructure of the voucher.

This.

Broad net of private sector actors really enabled us to deliver a rapid response, a high-quality.

High quality response.

But where I think we need to be reflected on this was once our once our endeavor is done, which of these private sector actors remain embedded in the community?

Which of them will continue to offer the services that we had engaged them to do.

And how would their relationships with these communities evolve over time.

So some of them, there was built-in sustainability.

We take a look at the micro grid and that was exactly what they needed to support that we gave was exactly what they needed in order to kick start their business operations.

So there is a high level of likelihood that they'll continue to provide services and then actually in the earthquake that just happened recently, their infrastructure survived and they were able to resume operations.

But in the case of the materials and the vendors, while a lot of awareness was raised and, you know people whose roofs were prepared with these materials and with these, with these techniques.

Were very happy with the results and well equipped to survive future high categories storms.

The vendors simply don't have the necessary incentives to play in place to continue, to stock those materials unless there is demand and those communities need to increase their purchasing power.

So the hope is that venue.

The bring a multitude of services.

You think about will these things lead to better income streams over time?

And will they translate the knowledge that they have these materials are good, that the right techniques have to be in place to actually translate into demand and buying decisions.

Local builders and their awareness of the techniques, use of things like roof trusses and hurricane straps.

That knowledge exists and continues to inform their practice.

And maybe it's going to be adapted back to the materials that are more easily available.

But some of those techniques will survive and we believe that will have a lasting impact in the case of the electronic ... .

There is really no reason for our vendors to continue to use them.

So that was a short-term activity.

But some of the things are on customer service and teaching the vendors about the importance of talking to homeowners about the materials and quality of materials and driving.

Sort of decisions towards higher-quality materials wherever possible, that knowledge and decision-making and awareness remains.

And finally, the homeowners themselves, I think we received a lot of whole lot of great feedback about how safe they felt, how they could visibly see the difference, and that they realized that.

You know, these things, that there was there was active participation when they've entered the store, they were the ones who were making choices about many of the things that were being bought and they were felt very empowered and inform their decision-making in a way that they may be hadn't been before.

So this was this sort of landscape of private sector engagement.

In a very difficult post-disaster context.

And I would say, I would say for the purposes of our project, this was were good decisions and we were happy.

But for the long-term for the sector as a whole, for us to think about how can we build an even more sustainability and think through how can, how can our interventions reduced.

To distortions in the market or be short-term, have short-term effects.

Next slide, please.

Disaster risk production activities are in contrast, give you really the room to develop much.

Much, more long-term partnerships, to really get to know your partners in and out, to understand their business models, to, be able to support the evolution of their business models and to ensure that there is long-term continuity that you you're working very much alongside the market that you're distortions.

Are minimal if at all.

And that you also have more of a roster of partners.

You have the luxury of time if I can say that.

To think through building that roster out, and then really tailoring each partner strength and thinking through additionality you also have the time to.

Iterates.

I think Tad and Valéry pointed this out to you want you're never going to land correctly.

Not never, but you're unlikely to land on a perfect solution from the very beginning.

So program or any long-term program left.

Is loves you to sort of think through that and innovate and continue to.

Design to the perfect solution.

In this case, in the program upgrade, we actually knew that water and sanitation and particularly sanitation marketing was an important, important part of our activities.

And we.

Had been working with a local company called blurry, which wanted to assemble well managed.

Factor local toilet.

Paper but, really, really catered their marketing and their market segments to very vulnerable communities.

So when we were doing DRM, activities, they were a great partner for us.

They thought of it as a great way to expand their reach and market share.

So they came in and designed floats around awareness, around sanitation and hygiene.

They were inactive part of the video that we put together that you saw earlier.

They create a jobs in the community just by the fact that we had opened up access to them and those activities and those supply chains and those distribution models whose incomes.

Generations have continued long after our program has ended.

And so I think this really for us, broad home again, the point that DR programs are extremely critical, just in terms of making communities more resilient, but they're also really critical because businesses have greater expectations and greater.

Returns out of partnering with us with something like this because we worked with their business models as opposed to taking their services and sure warning them into something that we're designing for different results.

And I just wanted to stop here and I'm sure this resonates with many of your experiences in the field as well.

Thinking through disaster response and assessment.

Service production.

Thank you.

Thank you so much.

I think.

Over to you, Laura.

Okay.

Thank.

You, Anyway.

Yes.

So.

Thank you too both of you.

We.

Do have about 15 minutes for questions and thank you to those of you who have already put questions in the, chat box please feel free.

Keep doing so.

I know for some of the questions, the presenters have answered them in the chat.

So I especially appreciate that I'd like to put a question out maybe to both organizations, to ECI.

[inaudible] is that both of you mentioned telling an infrastructure.

Including electricity, technological infrastructure.

And as we know the who's a common challenge in a lot of fragile contexts.

Are there any advice or lessons that you might like to offer to other programs that are facing the same challenges.

Anybody who would like to start I can take his hat yes I think these challenges exist and I think the pandemic has demonstrated very clearly the huge digital divide that exists, not just between.

Countries, but also within communities, within countries.

But I would say the counter point is that communities have grids workarounds in many.

Cases they also have ideas around ways in which they want to engage in, even in a disaster response, context it was important to work with.

The existing actors as much as possible.

So transfer saw the company that be highlighted for the vouchers had worked with many communities in Haiti, they new the constraints of the infrastructure they were able to help us design something that would work within the, within the context of infrastructure in the South.

The grid provider had it was a startup and had many, lessons learned even in the year or so that they had been working on the grid before we got there.

And again, I think they were in it for the long term, so we were able to lean into their own assessments of the market and work with their knowledge as opposed to.

Coming in and telling them how they should rethink their business model.

What would you yeah, thanks.

For us.

Yeah.

And I think this kind of goes back to that scale.

Can be not the same as substance.

Is it as we were beginning.

Particularly on building out this system, we were really thinking about, okay, what are all the tools that you need to have in place, right?

So we put a lot of money and time and energy into building technology systems and solutions.

And frankly, they all just felt flat, right on their face and did not work.

And so we actually ended up doing was scrapping all of those and going back to going back to paper systems, going back to just really letting people understand, Okay.

What is the role of these, what is the value that they're bringing in terms of capturing, receive information.

Capturing different data collection points that we need to operate as a business.

And I'll say probably the number one most important piece of technology that we brought into the business has just been checklists.

And so now we've created a checklist for kind of every step of what you need to.

Along the business.

And that's how we can help drive things towards a brand standard.

And that's actually something that came from one of our private partners target, which is a large retail chain within the US.

And one of the things that we really liked was that anytime you go into, you know what to target.

It feels different than a Walmart that say, and we said, okay, what's the deal here?

How do you do that?

And it came down to something simple like a checklist.

And so we really did just focus on that first and we said, okay, we ran that first clinic for a year, developed those really [inaudible] checklists.

Went to another clinic, ran that for another year before we expanded to work there.

And now we're able to slowly increase the cadence of that.

And now though we have these other systems in place, we're now able to go back and say, Okay, where is it appropriate to inject technology into our business?

Process so now we've developed our own clinic.

Management system.

By the end of this year, we'll be launching your own digital water management solution as well.

Boys first really working with our end-users in this case to our own staff, either largely men and women from the village that I've only ever worked in.

The informal economy and got them to understand really what does that process first and then digitize that.

After doing several iterations and how we can make that process work in Congo over.

Thank you so much.

To both of.

You I like that takeaway and that sometimes.

Better to that I start with the paper rather than to try and have a digital solution.

I'd like to pose the question now.

There was a question about understanding, of course, that the programs that you are presenting have finished now, but if you wanted to speak to any adjustments to your current programming due to COVID or due to political crisis that's taken place over the last year.

And how that might have affected having private sector engagement approach.

I can say that this is a bit difficult situation that we currently facing in Haiti.

Now, what first of all, in terms of COVID, we tried to use, I mean the type of meeting that we used to have.

We have mostly future meeting.

We [SPEAKER] Have to visit.

Did the community or have some kind of meeting or what relation with the community.

So we respect the distance and have people sitting somewhere where people we can respect the distance between them.

What in terms of for.

The fighting ground, I know that is very concentrated.

What one thing that we have.

We ended, you know, I mean, people from the community.

So they are we build kind of ownership.

So they are part of the program that we are implementing.

Let's say that when it's some facilitator or someone that can lead to process.

We try to find someone who is qualified inside the.

Community so they can have people you know.

Get inside when we have some problem.

What for sure, sometimes we put on, you know, we put on hold some activities.

Most of them we can say that we are currently implementing and even we anticipate some delay, but we have been able to work so far in some university heart community.

So much.

I really appreciate that.

Next question.

Aci, there are quite a few questions about sort of how it works and what the business model is.

How do you set prices?

What is the USAID funding for what do?

You do with?

The revenue?

With fear exit plan.

Either wanted to take a moment to kind of clarify status as yeah so I think it's really good question, and it's one that's a, little?

Bit different than I think a lot of other approaches.

[SPEAKER].

And that's, that.

Eci is essentially like a holding company for us.

It's something allows us to facilitate the relationship with USA ID.

But a CLE is something that exists within its own right as its own structure.

And so people often perceive when room.

When you're first setting up people, it's okay like but when does the ceiling right?

When I say well, we'll leave as soon as Coca-Cola leaves, right?

Like we've got the same exit plan is that as long as people want to buy our services, then we want to see only to exist.

And so I think it's a little bit of a different mindset shift, right.

Rather than being this project-based approach, what we're really trying to do is use the USAID funded project.

As we continue to create well, after the period of grant funding.

And so we're actually in our second GDA.

So that's the funding mechanism that we use.

But the first four clinics and water systems that we built under the first GDA with USAID are continuing to operate without any further.

Funding.

So the phase that we're in now is you actually expands our retail footprint.

So add on these zones until we get to 10, which in our financial projections will then get it so that not only are all of the frontline costs of the clinic, so the stack, the maintenance of the clinic.

Equipment and medicines and outreach and all those things are covered, as well as for the water system.

But also those corporate costs that are in Bukavu.

So our brand management team are medical officer that reviews, you know, the quality of cases are finance and HR teams, all the things that you need to run a business, right?

Will be growing.

To 10.

Because then that should cover all of those costs.

And so with that, then the tens owns will continue to operate without any further philanthropic funding.

Now, except, for there's 5% of the population that cannot afford the services.

And so we use targeted [inaudible].

To subsidize their access to the services.

And we don't subsidize the business.

We subsidize them, using the services, which is our distinction.

And one just quick thing I'll add is that we really use that because we've used this model to show that it is possible.

We're hoping is that as we then have the stable platform, is that then we'll be able to look at different types of financing in order to then grow more quickly with market-based financing as well.

Over.

Thank you so much.

I think we have about one more minute, so [SPEAKER] I might have how fast you can.

But for the both of you and maybe some effects, both organizations talks about the need to pivot and knowing when walkaway, when something's not working.

Is there any last advice that you would love to share with the audience about how to know when to do that or have the courage to do that, or how to be realistic, but still ambitious.

In your targets.

Over teeth.

And then medically intense.

Yeah, I think that that is something that we all have to be cognizant tough.

I think.

I also think private sector engagement never really starts and stops.

So regardless of whether individual programs or projects too so you're always wanting to be aware of.

In the landscape you are wanting to keep up with the longstanding institutions you're wanting to promote new technology.

And I think in all of that we have to recognize that the market is much more tolerant to failure.

Maybe then we are.

I love room for iteration and a loves room for course.

Correction.

And also the market is never static, so I think all of these things make it easier to think of when a particular path or a partnership doesn't quite work the way it does and not, not intending to shift blame,

but really thinking about it as a true partnership, thinking about the end user experience and being willing to make room.

For more people to come in and sharing lessons.

Learned like this, Thank you.

That's excellent.

Yeah.

Go for it.

Yeah.

I was just saying complete.

So every step for us is an opportunity and the lesson on the same time.

And the great question.

What do we left behind after our program, like when people demand programs on the ground because the needs I see there.

Maybe sometimes we have programs for five years and then the needs are not for five years.

The needs on the community.

Now.

Kind of fragile community.

The needs is more than that.

And it's really important to implement those kinds of models on the that we can bring that mindset of.

I'm poor the community and the communities who have those access.

For,, long.

So over, to unfortunately, I think we're out of time that I really appreciate that.

I'd like to.

Just thank our presenters for sharing their time.

And then your lessons.

Even they're feeling.

I'll turn it.

Back to Janina for closing.

And of course.

Thank you to all my participants for joining.

Thank you, Laura.

Thank you, everyone so much for spending your time with us today.

A special thank you to our presenters as you'll see, there's a lot of really rich questions that we've received into the chat with that being said, we will invite you now to go ahead and fill out these exit polls that will appear on your screen in just a few moments.

And if you do have a moment to say just a couple of minutes extra, we do invite you to continue sharing questions and thoughts into this chat.

Do share with us what was the most useful.

Content of today.

And then also what additional questions or comments do you have for our presenters?

We will continue to keep this room open for you to engage.

And with that, you'll see on the screen, we do have some follow-up information some email addresses that you can access if you have more questions.

And have a great rest of your day.

Thank you, everyone.