

MICROLINKS



Fostering Livelihoods in Times of Crisis: Lessons From Syria

Speakers: Kelly Van Husen, *Global Communities*

Vaidehi Krishnan, *Mercy Corps*

Moderators: Laura Meissner, *USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance*

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Kelly Van Husen, Global Communities



Kelly Van Husen is Humanitarian Assistance Director for Global Communities, where she develops and implements Global Communities' humanitarian assistance strategy, focusing on Syria and the Middle East. Kelly has over ten years of experience in humanitarian assistance and development. She has also worked as the Deputy Chief of Party for Grants and Contracts for IRD and spent over two years working in Afghanistan for Development Alternatives, Inc. as a Field Director for development and stabilization efforts. She previously worked for Global Communities (then known as CHF International) on emergency and early recovery programming in Indonesia following the 2006 earthquake on Java island and as a program development assistant for CHF's emergency and transition programs. Kelly holds an M.S. in Human Rights from the London School of Economics and a B.A. in International Relations and Political Science from the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Vaidehi Krishnan, Mercy Corps



Vaidehi Krishnan (Vai), has over 12 years of experience in markets in complex crises in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Most recently, she worked with Mercy Corps in the Middle East supporting cash, markets, and livelihoods programs. Vai is also the lead on Mercy Corps' Syria study (forthcoming) that looks at how people are continuing to maintain or adapt their livelihoods inside Syria.

SUPPORTING LIVELIHOODS IN SYRIA

Food Security

Supporting small-scale farmers through provision of seeds, tools, fertilizer



SUPPORTING LIVELIHOODS IN SYRIA

Fostering Market Recovery



Restoring the wheat value chain through:

- Wheat cultivation
- Fire control
- Irrigation rehabilitation
- Post-harvest production

WHY WHEAT?

*“A family will never know hunger as long as there is bread in the house”
– Syrian Proverb*

- Agricultural sector contributed as much as 27% of GDP in 2001, falling to 17% by 2010
- Pre-war, Syria was one of the largest exporters of wheat in the region
- Largely an “identity crop” with practical and symbolic significance
- Many agencies measured bread production and prices as an initial metric of the impact of the conflict



GOVERNMENT CONTROL

“To the last donum”

Every season, every farmer would meet with his government-worker extension agent and be told which crops, in which quantities, he would plant for each season.

The Syrian government:

- Subsidized the cost of all inputs
- Guaranteed the harvest prices it paid farmers
- Owned the largest flour mills and bakeries
- Fixed the market price of bread



THE IMPACT OF WAR

- 17 wheat varieties lost
- Five year (2011-2016) estimated losses to the agricultural sector exceed USD \$16 billion
- Value of destroyed crops estimated at USD \$903 million
- Damage and losses in the livestock sector estimated at USD \$5.5 billion
- Estimated cost to rebuild the agricultural sector: USD \$11-17 billion
- 90% of Syrian families now spend over half their income on food



THE WAY FORWARD

Building a resilient agricultural sector



The Syrian agricultural sector collapsed for a reason – the model was unsustainable

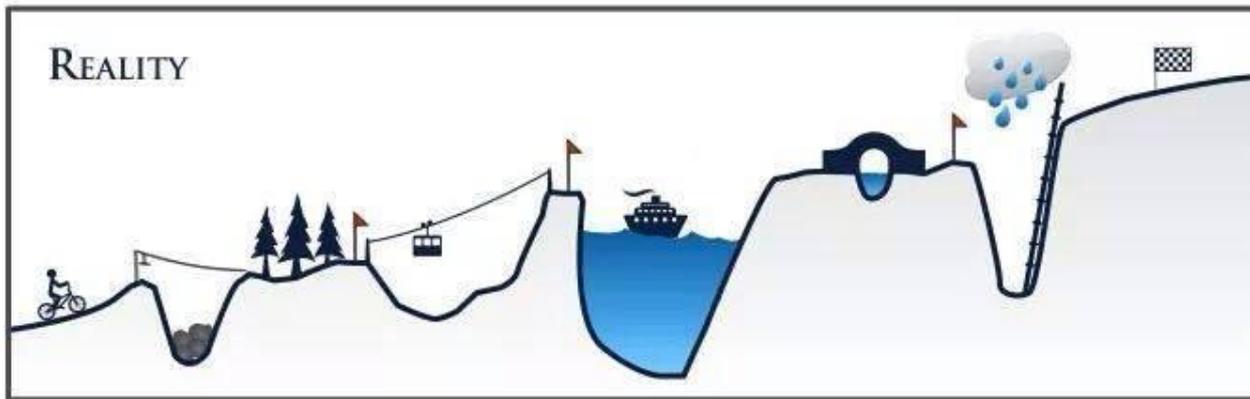
A return to the *status quo ante* after the war is unlikely

Support privately-owned farms and facilities, target key weaknesses in the value chain

Inputs of \$300 yield an average of \$1,200-\$2,500 in income

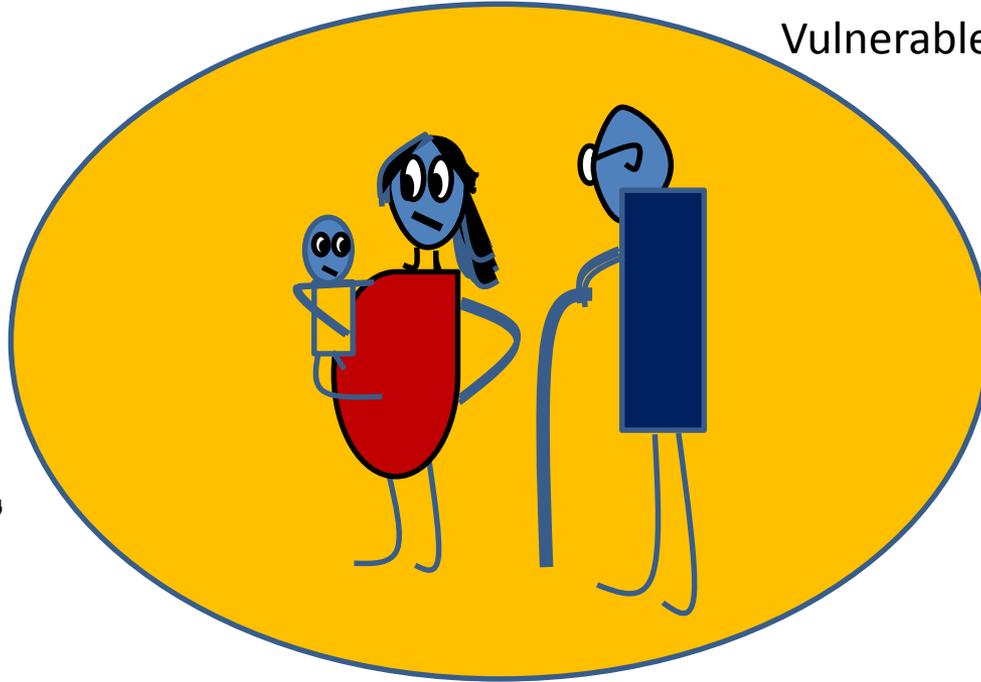
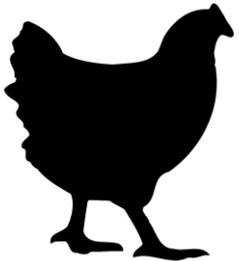
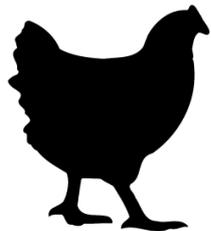
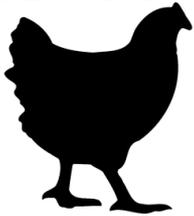
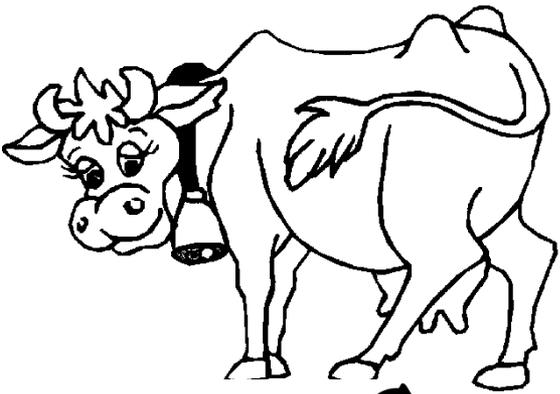
Plan vs. Reality

Donor proposal vs. lessons learned



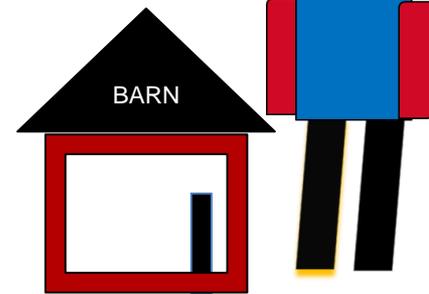
The plan

What we proposed



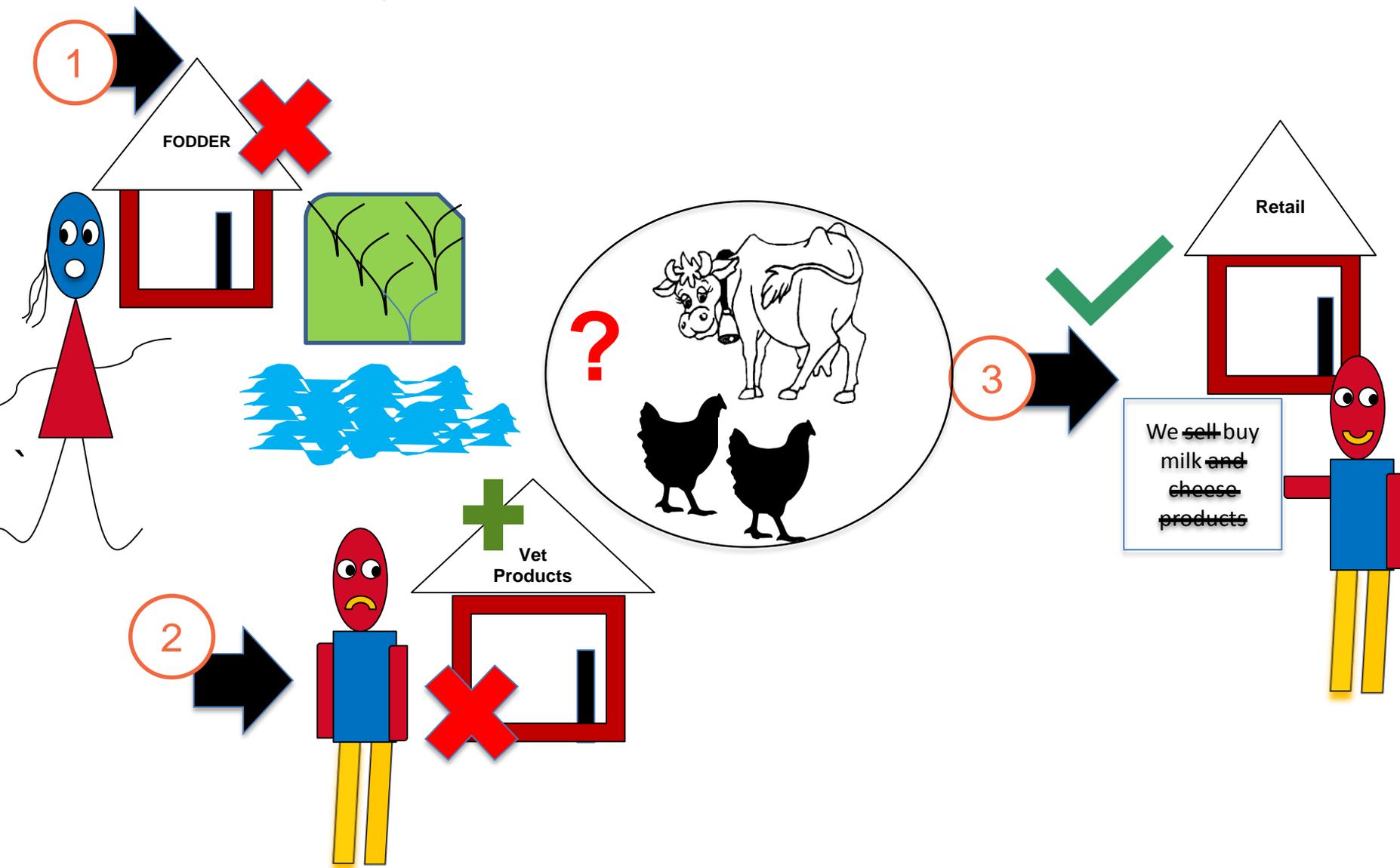
Vulnerable but not eligible

Eligible but not vulnerable



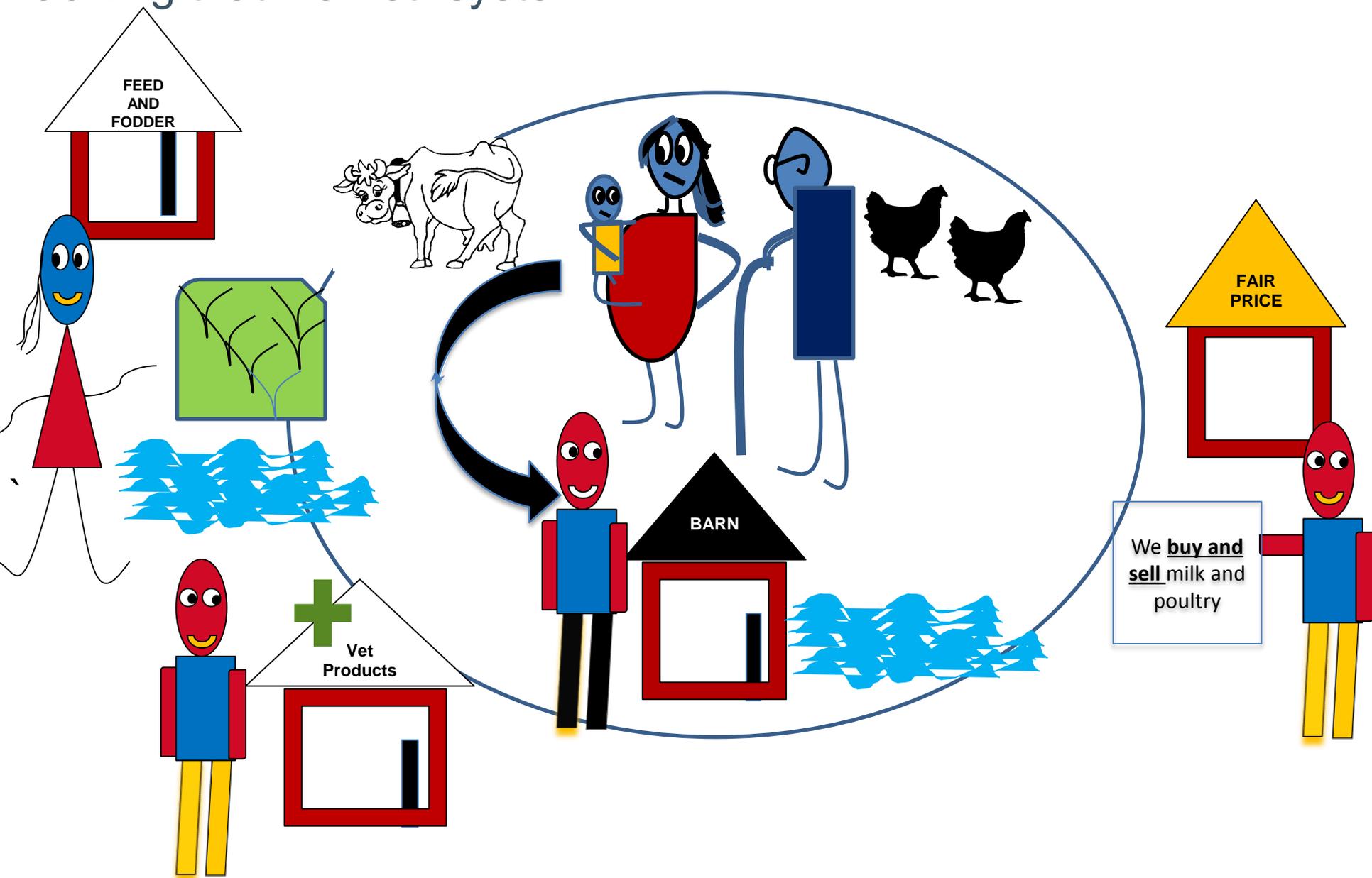
The curve ball

Cost-benefit analysis



Reality bites

Tackling that market “system”

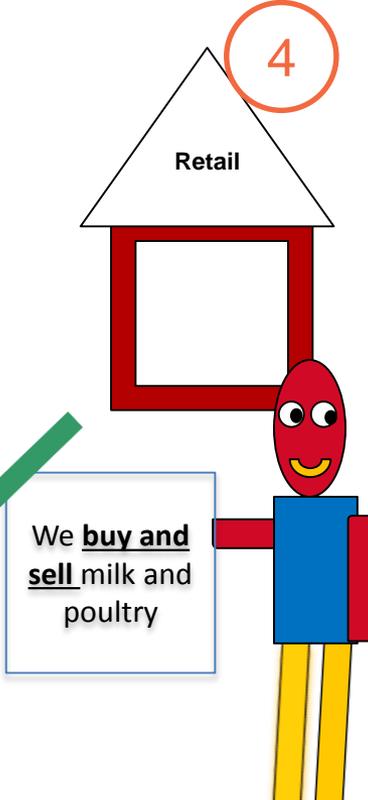
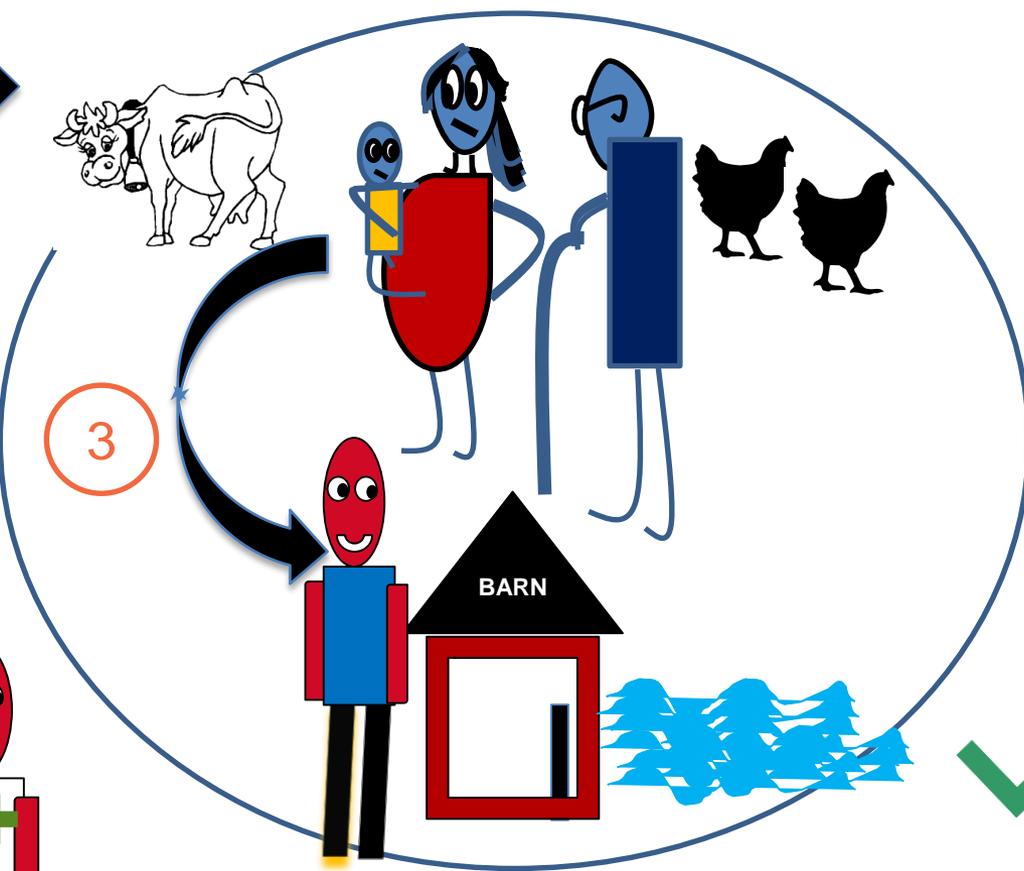
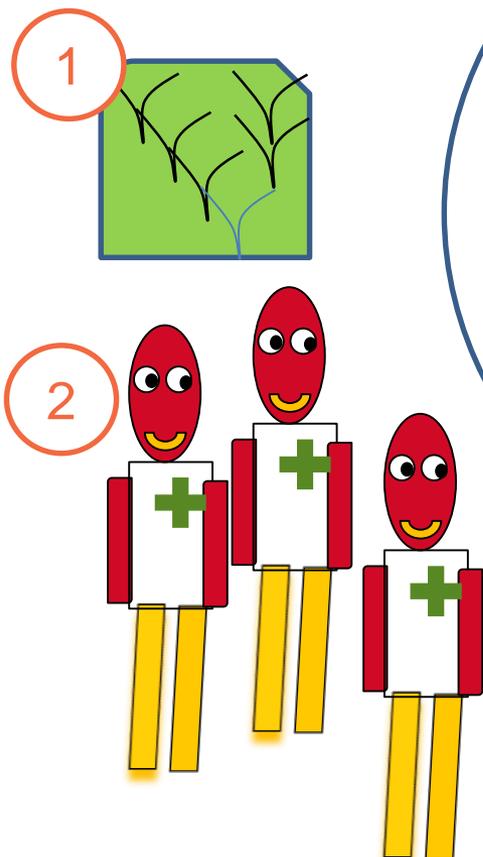


Shaken, but not stirred

The reverse curve ball

Food security

Phase 1: Direct Intervention

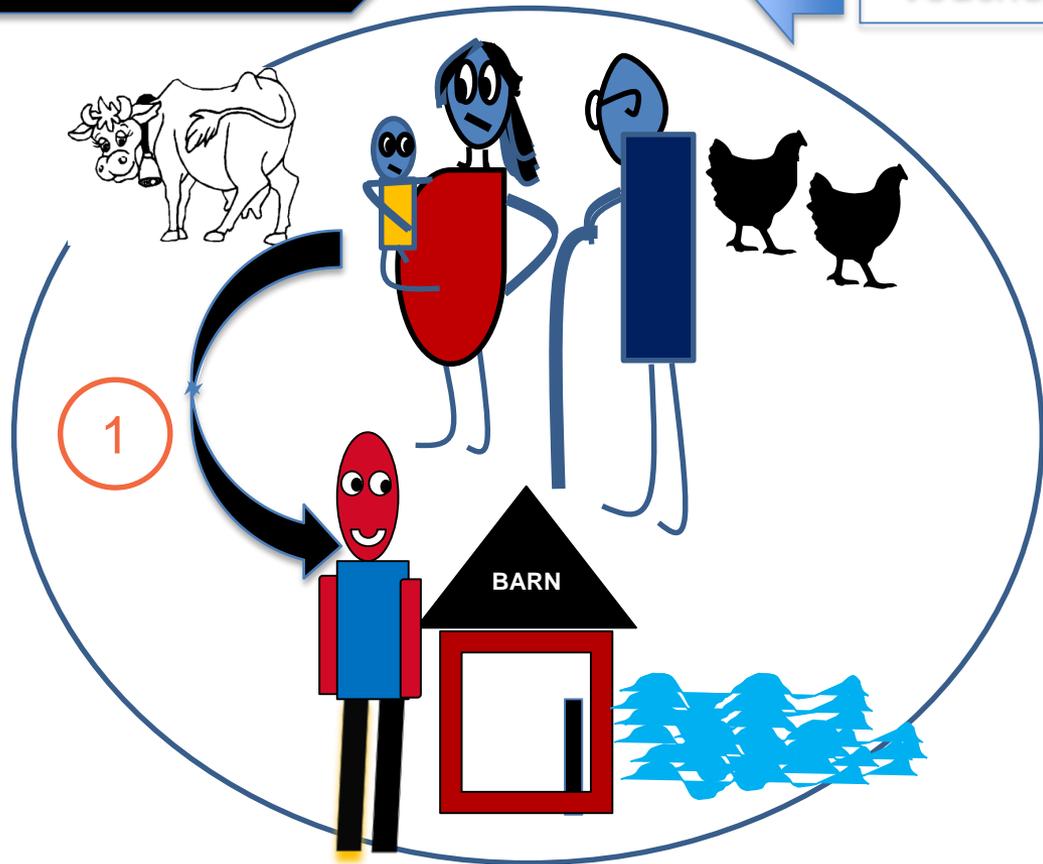


Phase 2

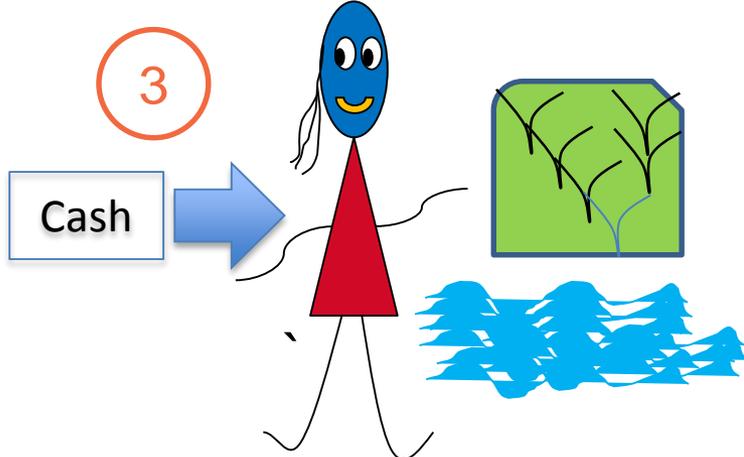
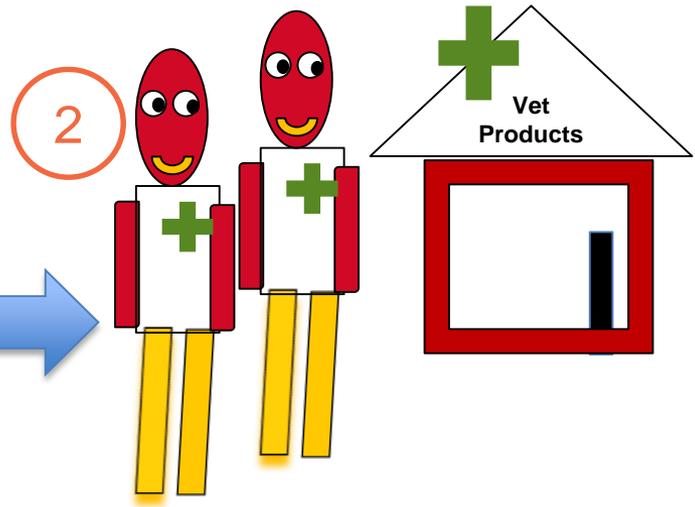
Supply chain or value added outputs?

Food security and livelihoods

Market support



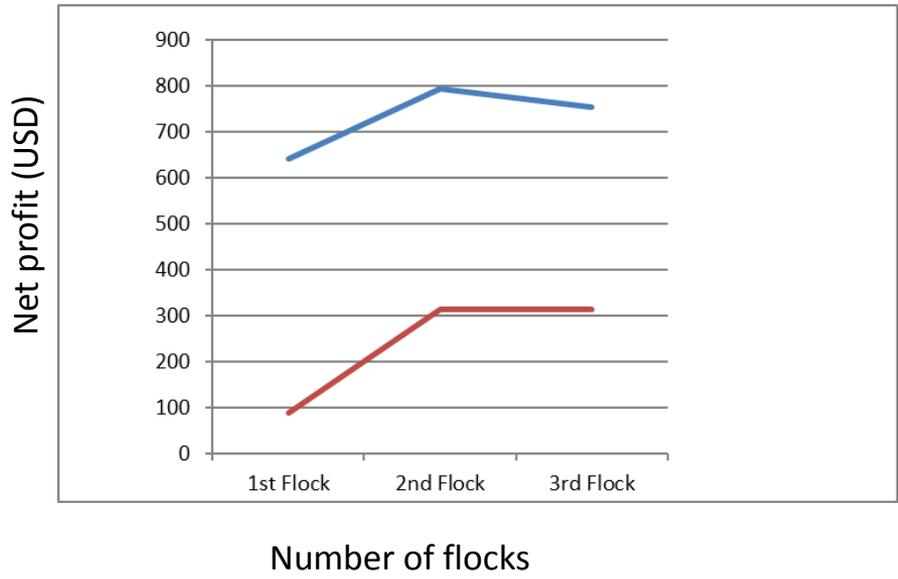
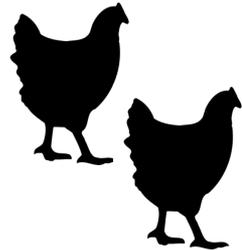
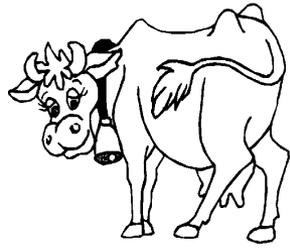
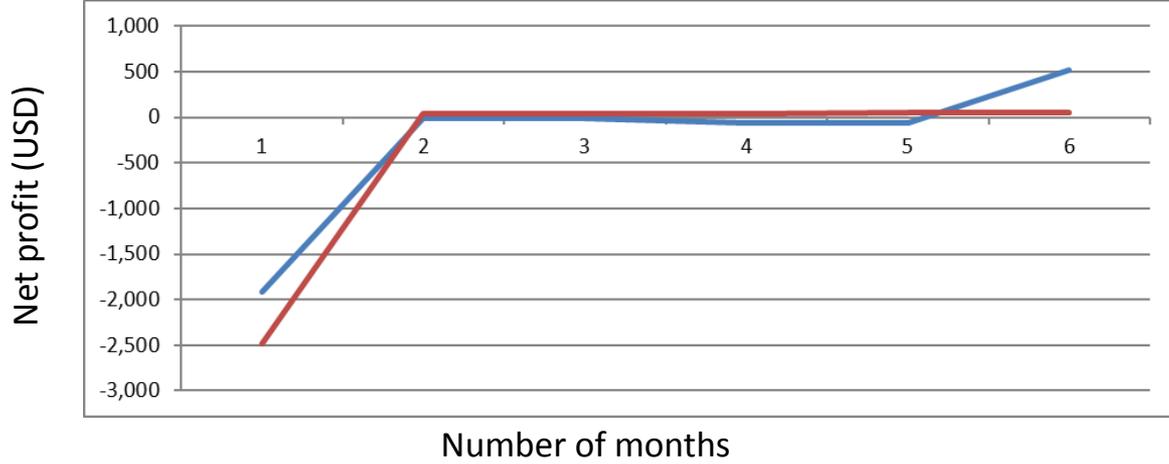
Vouchers



Neither shaken, nor stirred..



The numbers are solid! (So far...)



Phase 3

To come...

Food security and Livelihoods

Phase 3: Value Add products



Milk

Cheese

Meat

Processing

Hide

Tanning
Processing

Fertilizer

Heifer / calf

Wait a minute, this isn't...

Go on finish that thought



1. Facilitation? Feasible?
 - a. Seller's market
 - b. Trust is a scarce commodity
 - c. Producers don't have negotiating power, *but...*

2. Targeting vs. Impact

TOP TAKE - AWAYS

- 1 Life saving vs. better life saving
- 2 Phased approach
- 3 Market price is a logical place to start
- 4 Don't try to control for everything
- 5 Don't roll your eyes at donor requests 😊



*Questions
and Answers*

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