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Monitoring and Evaluating When Facing Complexity: Perspectives From a Practitioner-Led Initiative





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Marcus Jenal **MESOPARTNER**

Marcus Jenal has been working in international development for nearly ten years. He has been doing freelance work since 2011, and was invited by Mesopartner, a global consultancy firm with a focus on systemic economic development, to become an associate in 2012. Jenal has worked in various positions in Swiss organizations, gathering experience in project management and implementation, coaching teams, and doing advocacy work. It is his goal to develop practical and effective approaches that help practitioners to recognize complexity and act to develop effective interventions in the face of uncertainty.



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Tjip Walker **USAID/PPL**

Dr. S. Tjip Walker is a Senior Policy Analyst in the Policy, Planning and Learning Bureau's Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research at USAID. He leads Agency efforts to promote organizational learning, including more consistent and effective use of research and evaluation to support strategy development and project design. Walker also leads efforts to adapt evaluation techniques to complex environments. Previously, Walker served the Technical Lead within USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) where he coordinated CMM's analytical leadership across the programmatic spectrum from identifying at risk countries through early warning, to diagnosing conflict dynamics through assessment, to designing effective conflict programming, to monitoring and evaluating their impact.



Monitoring and Evaluating when Facing Complexity

Perspectives from a Practitioner-Led Initiative

MPEP Seminar Series – April 25, 2013

Marcus Jenal



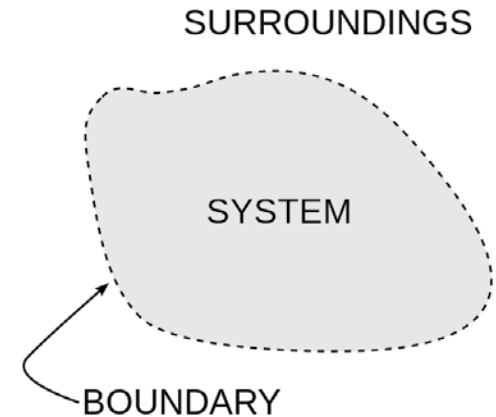
Content

- Definitions of systems and complexity
- Why complexity and systems?
- The Systemic M&E Initiative
- Conclusions and way forward

What are systems? What is complexity?

System

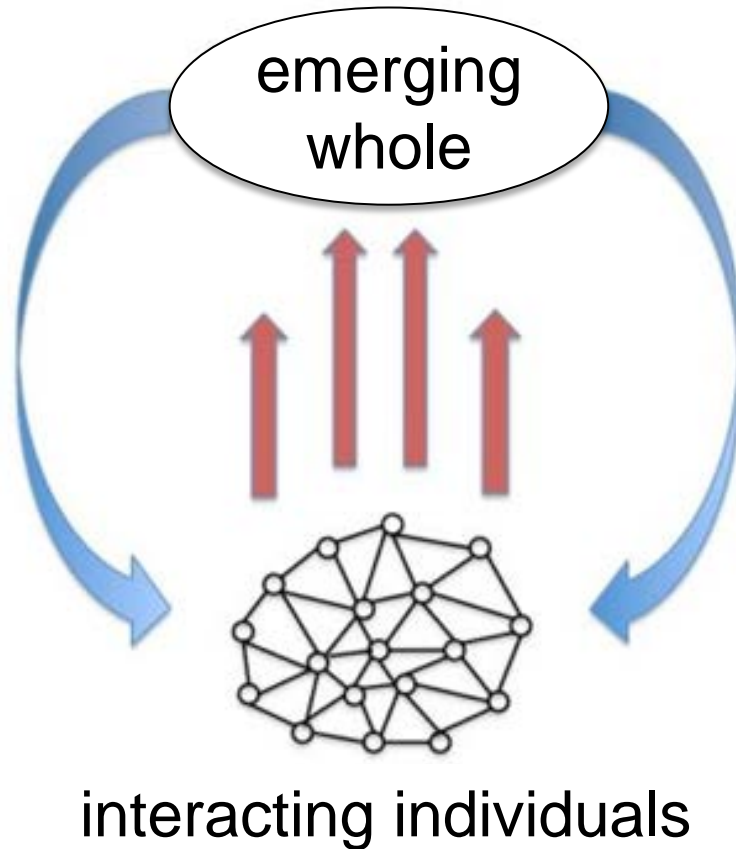
- interacting or interdependent components
- forming an integrated whole



Complex adaptive systems

- heterogeneous components
- highly interconnected and interdependent
- adapt to their environment

Characteristics of Complex Systems



- non-linearity
- emergence
- embedded in history (co-evolution)
- inherently hard to predict

The Systemic M&E Initiative

- Discussions in the SEEP Market Facilitation Initiative (MaFI) since 2010
- Funding from USAID/fhi360 in 2012
- Organized different events
 - Mircrolinks Speakers Corner and Webinar
 - Opening plenary SEEP Annual Conference 2012
- Three podcasts
- Synthesis Paper

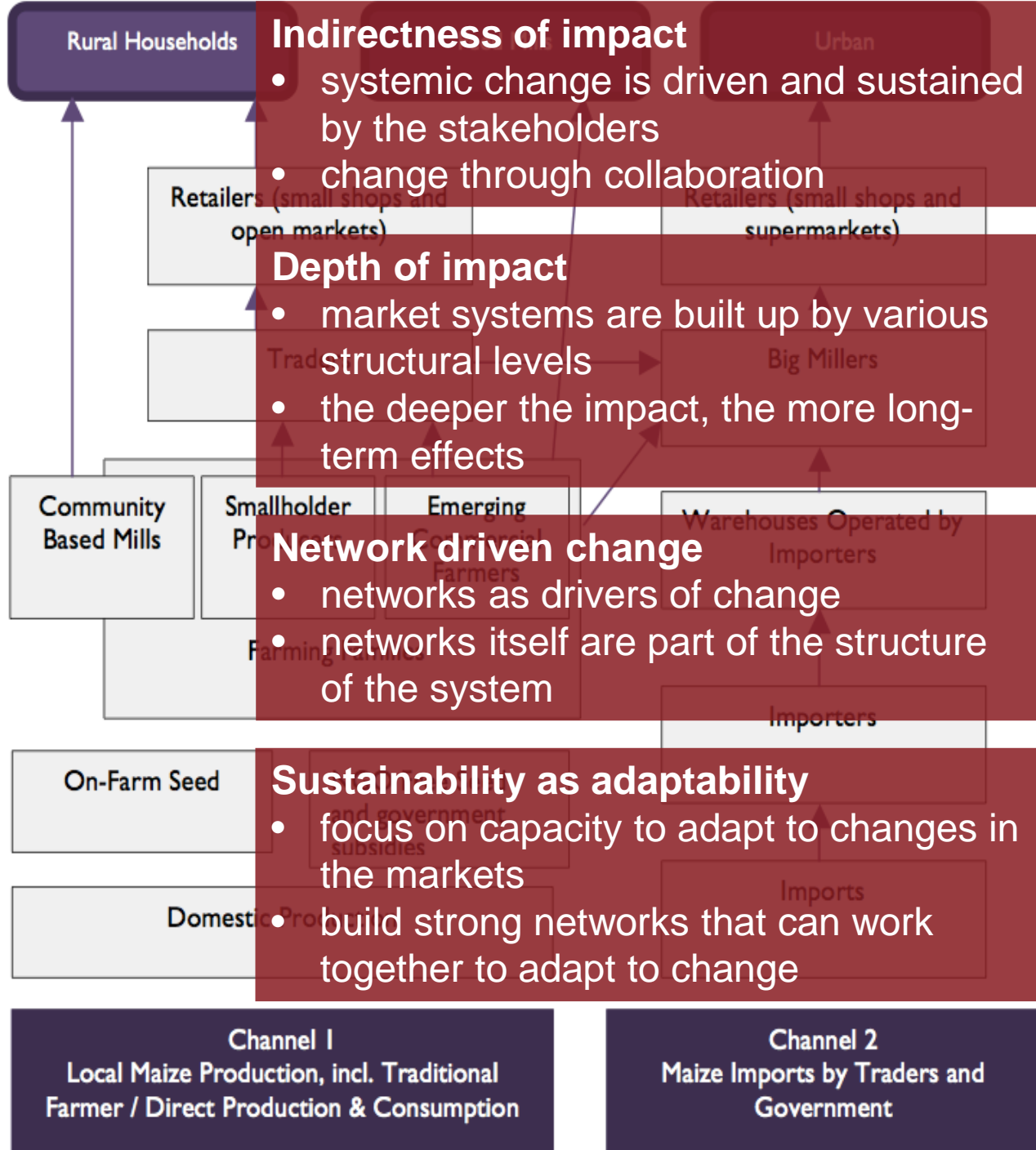
Practitioner's issues

1. Excessive focus on our direct effects on the poor
2. Excessive focus on extraction of information for accountability to the donors
3. Sustainability understood as longevity of our legacy

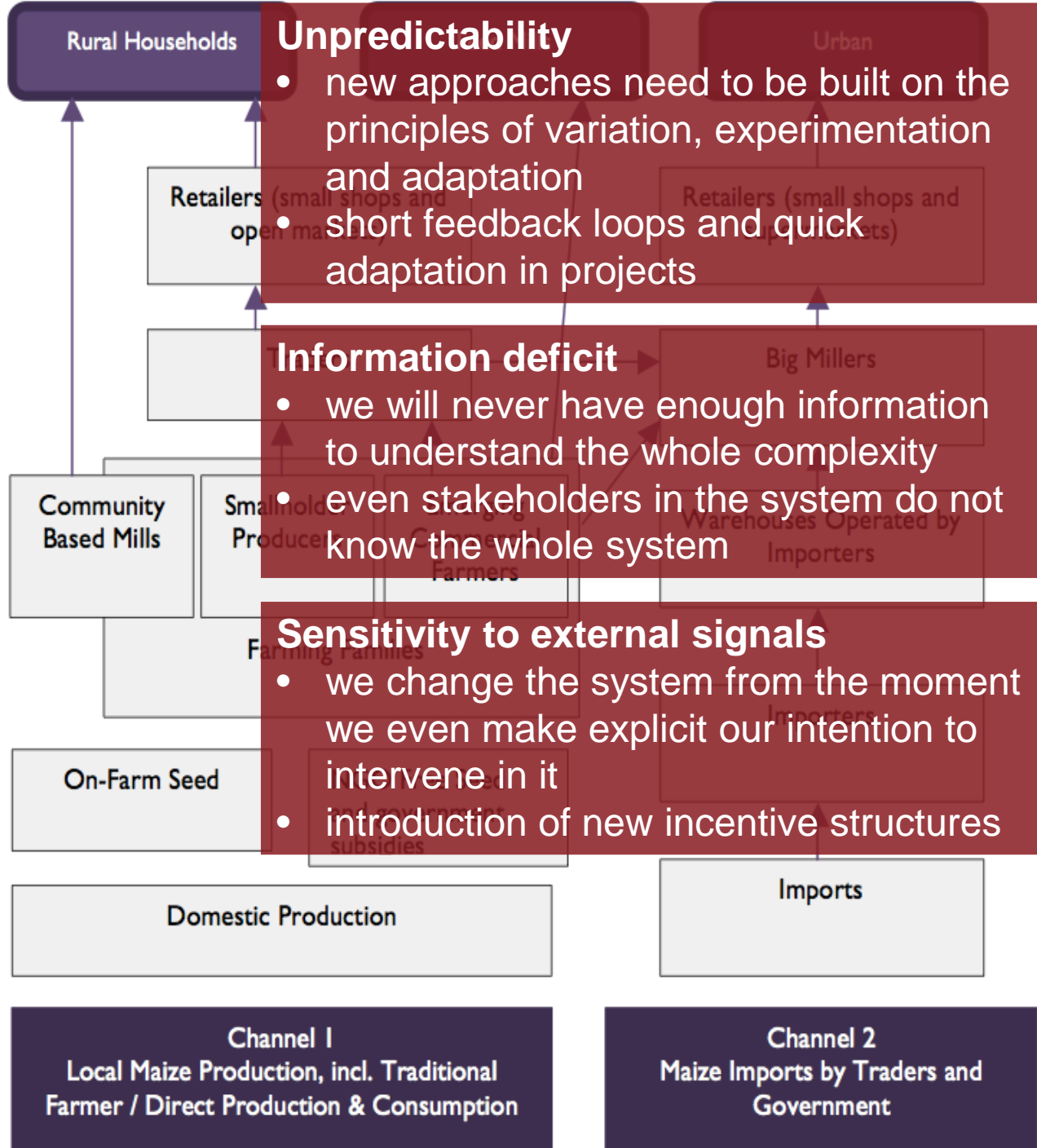
The Systemic M&E Principles

1. Indirectness of impact
2. Depth of impact
3. Network-driven change
4. Unpredictability
5. Sensitivity to external signals
6. Information deficit
7. Sustainability as adaptability

Systemic Market



Systemic Market



Possible ways forward

- We need a change in paradigm from an emphasis on predictability and control to bottom-up, decentralized and adaptive solutions
- The biggest obstacles are political, not technical
- Next steps: collect case studies to document practical applications of the principles

Thank you very much!

➤ Resources:

<http://seepnetwork.org/>

<http://seepnetwork.org/systemicme>

<http://seepnetwork.org/marketfacil>

<http://systemic-insight.com/>



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