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MPEP SEMINAR SERIES | Exploring Frontiers in Inclusive Market Development

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November 21, 2013

A New Effort to Embed Systems Thinking in USAID



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Dr. Tjip Walker is the Senior Policy Advisor for Local Systems in the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning (PPL) at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). He is currently leading Agency efforts to promote sustained development through greater attention to local systems: the constellations of local actors—public and private, national and grassroots, organizations and individuals—whose interactions produce development outcomes.



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A New Effort to Embed Systems Thinking in USAID

MPEP Seminar

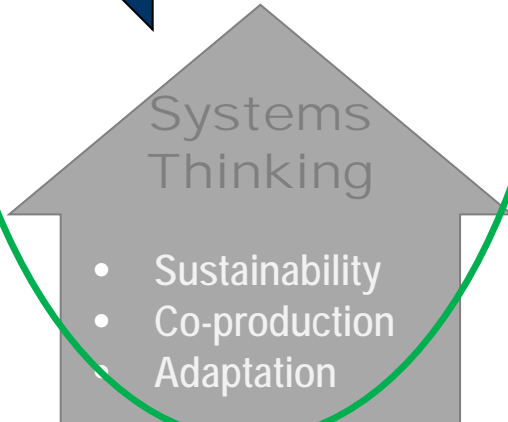
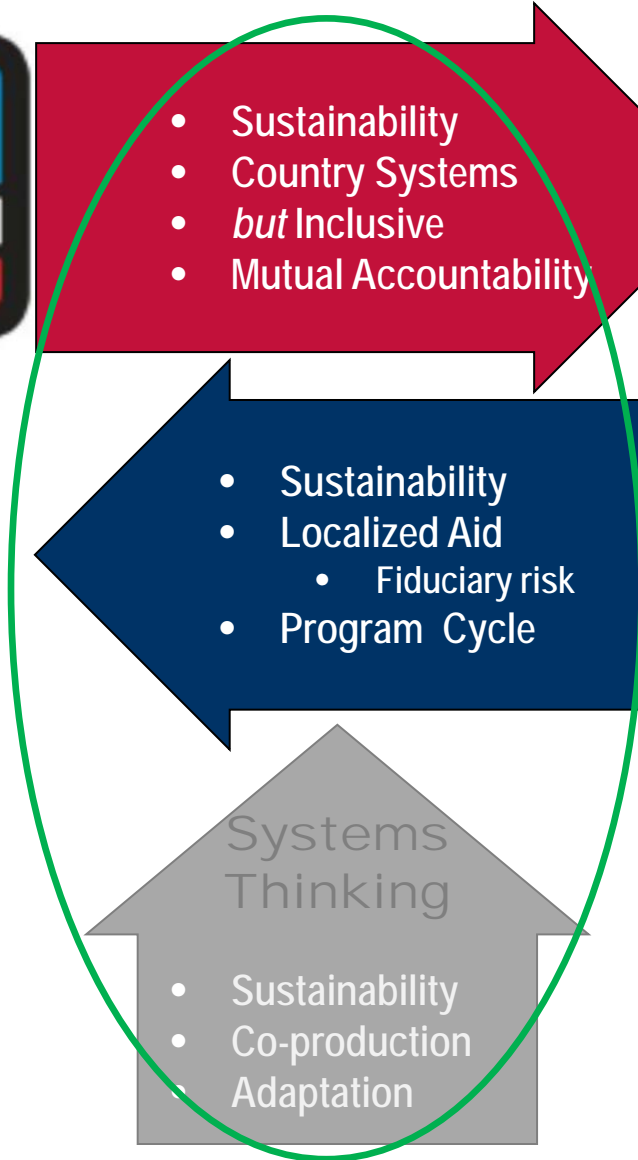
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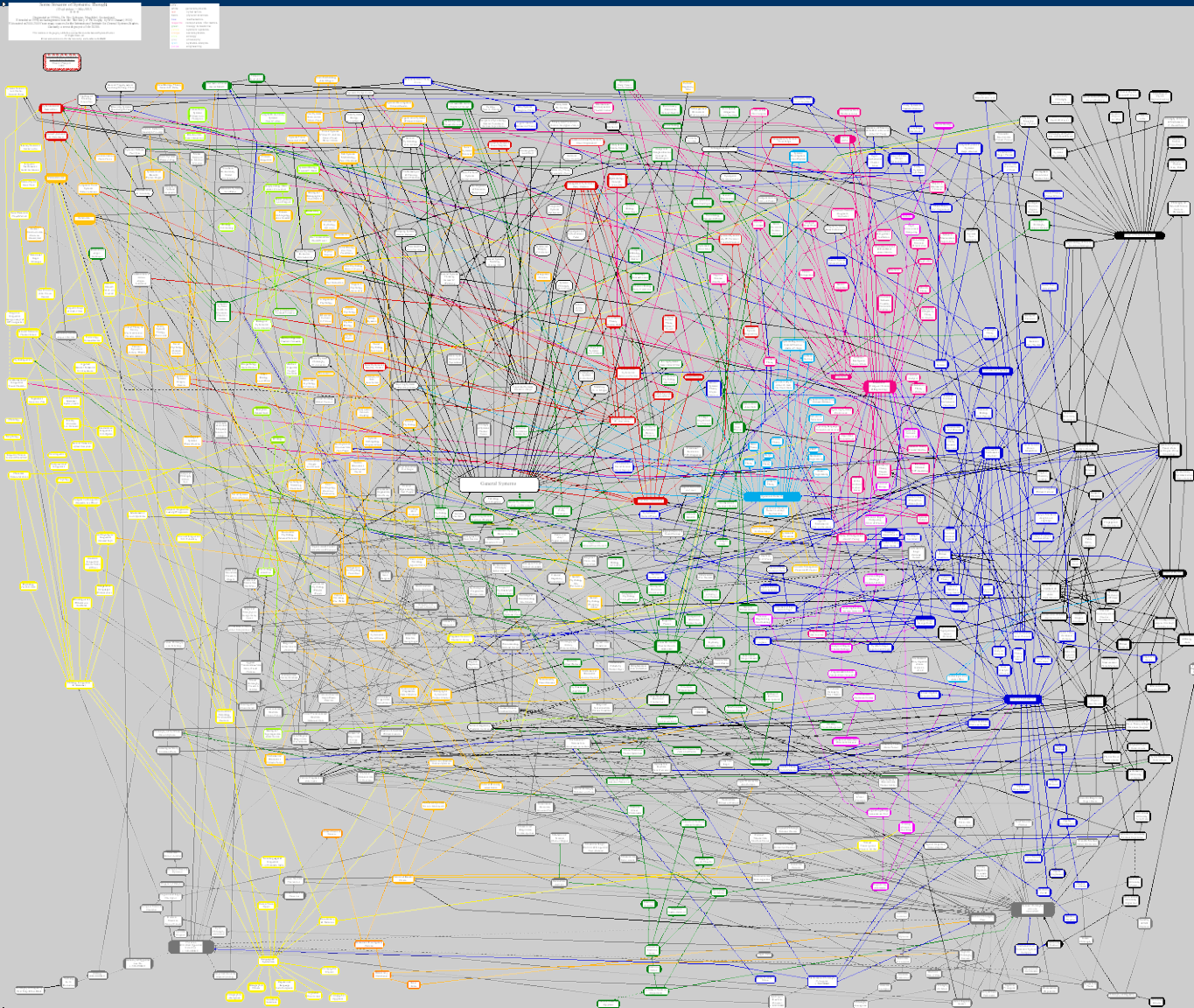
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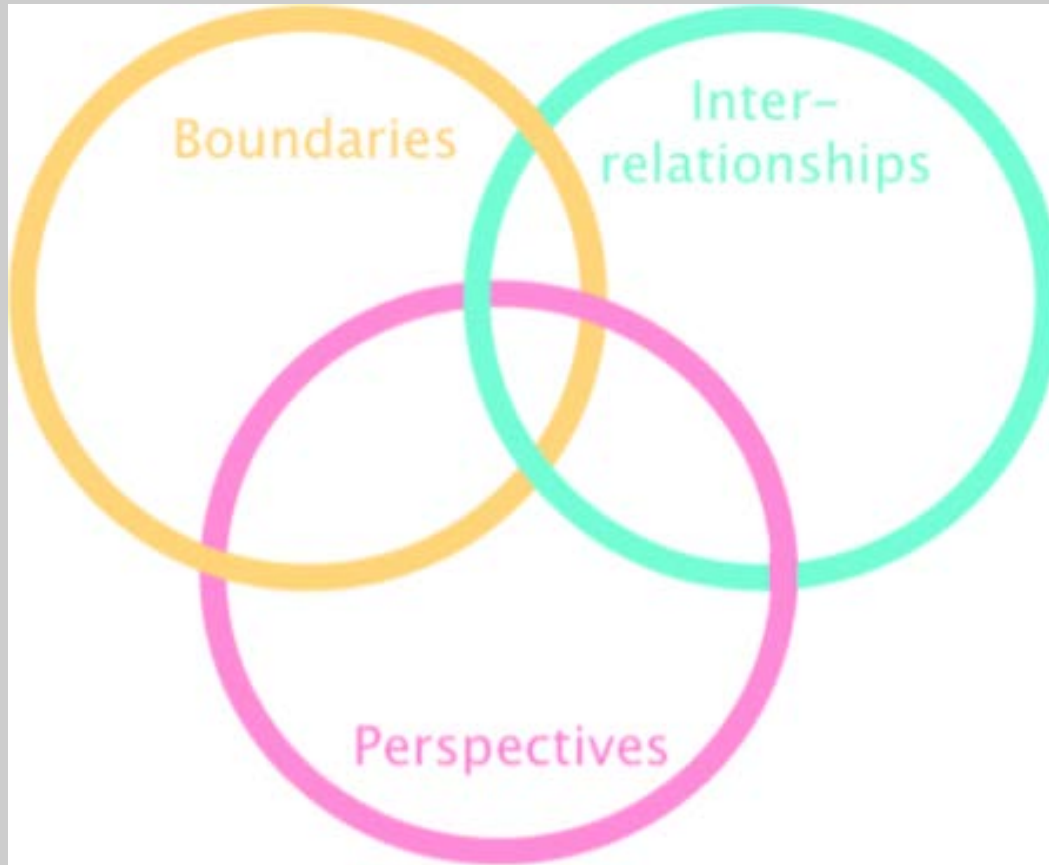
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Forward

Orientation



Source:
"Some Streams of
Systemic Thought,"
International Institute
for General Systems
Studies
h/t: Bob Williams

Orientation



Is about thinking systemically. . .

And being systemic. . .

- Be reflective
- Trust in self-organization
- Assume evolution
- Act in a responsible manner
- Be part of the world
- Act circular

Source: Williams & Hummelbrunner, *Systems Concepts in Action: A Practitioner's Toolkit*, Stanford U Press, 2009



Four areas that need early attention:

1. Identifying and assessing local systems
2. Designing multi-faceted projects that address identified weaknesses in those systems
3. Deepening and consolidating risk considerations
4. Developing monitoring and evaluation tools that can accurately chart progress in strengthening local systems and the sustainability of their results.



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1. Understand Local Systems

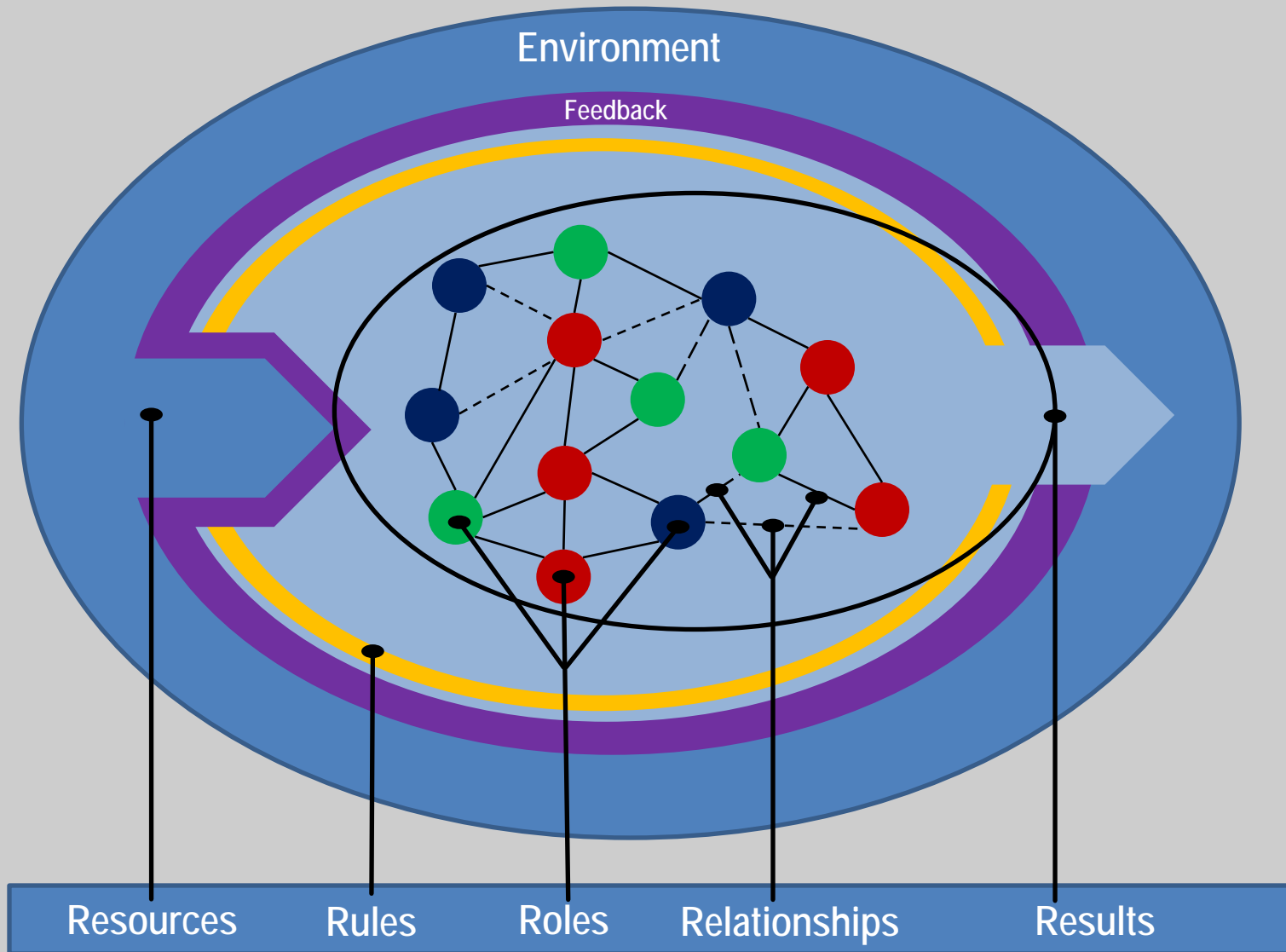
Local Systems:

- All actors engaged in producing a development outcome
- Understood in terms of:
 - Resources
 - Roles
 - Relationships
 - Rules
 - Results

Principles

1. Recognize there is always a system
2. Engage local systems everywhere
3. Tap into local knowledge
4. Map local systems

The 5Rs





■ **Design**

- Match a project design to a local system
- Utilize the full range funding/ implementation modes, including localized aid

■ **But design design . . .**

- As part of an engagement with the local system that starts before and continues after

Principles

5. Design holistically
6. Engage local systems continually
7. Ensure accountability
8. Embrace facilitation
9. Promote flexibility
10. Capitalize on our convening authority



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3. Assess risk comprehensively

- All development activities face risks
- Consider the range of risks
- Relate risks to rewards
- Improve our calculation of risks/rewards
- Balance risk mitigation with risk

4 Types of Risk

- Contextual
- Programmatic
- Reputational
- Fiduciary



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4. Monitor and Evaluate for Sustainability

- **Develop indicators**
 - Organizational strengthening
 - System strengthening
- **Evaluate lasting effects**
 - Ex-post evaluations



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The Challenge

**How do we make the most of
this opportunity?**



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<http://bit.ly/1b7Yqny>



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