

Global

Accelerated Microenterprise Advancement Project—Business Development Services Knowledge and Practice II (AMAP BDS K&P II)



Knowledge and Practice II builds on the successes of ACDI/VOCA's first Knowledge and Practice task order issued under the USAID-funded \$10 million Accelerated Microenterprise Advancement Project–Business Development Services contract. The goal of AMAP BDS is to increase incomes in poor communities and promote economic growth by enhancing the performance and competitiveness of micro and small enterprises (MSEs).

Under K&P I, ACDI/VOCA led research on factors and strategies that create wealth in poor communities and promote growth by linking small firms to profitable markets. This research centered on the development and articulation of a value chain approach to economic growth with poverty reduction. ACDI/VOCA published 18 papers, made 11 presentations and conducted trainings and workshops for over 450 USAID staff and program implementers. K&P II builds on the research conducted under K&P I, focusing on three areas of activity: generating knowledge, codifying emerging best practices and improving practice.

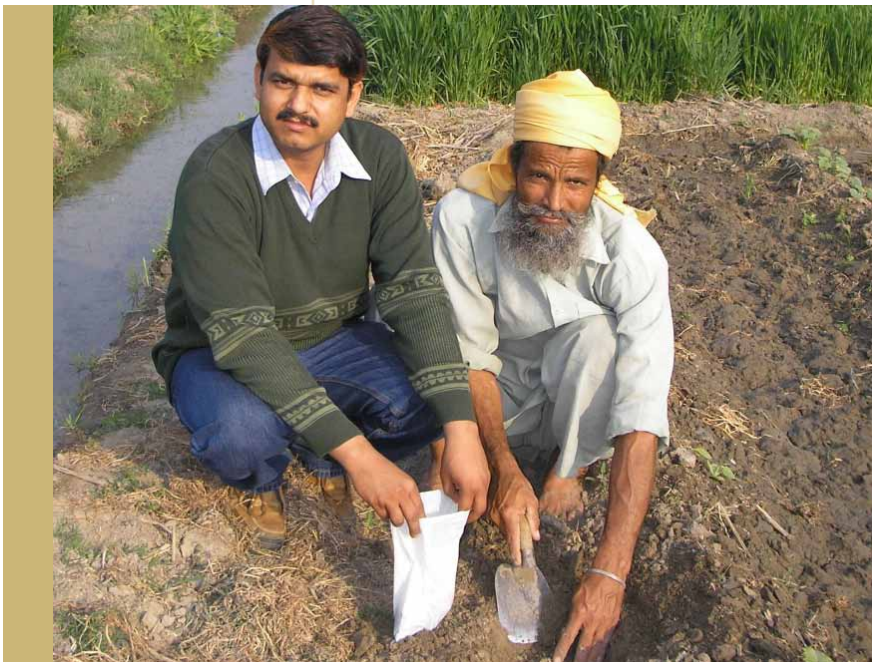
Generating Knowledge

ACDI/VOCA generates knowledge through primary research activities, which have included extensive value chain studies in Guatemala and Tanzania, along with an impact assessment of ACDI/VOCA's Growth-Oriented Microenterprise Development project in India. In support of USAID's Global Food Security Response, ACDI/VOCA also led a multi-country study of the rice value chain in West Africa. Desk and field research in Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal were integrated into a regional report, and findings were reviewed by 30 experts on West African rice. Similarly, end market analysis in Kenya and Ethiopia are informing donor and government strategies.

K&P II has assisted USAID and the Millennium Challenge Corporation in planning ways to rigorously evaluate complex, dynamic programs, balancing internal and external validity, and technical feasibility. ACDI/VOCA has brought together evaluation experts to identify indicators that move beyond project-bound outcomes to measure changes in relationships, attitudes and behavior.

Codifying Best Practices

ACDI/VOCA develops guidelines and materials that make action-oriented recommendations for improved practice. Along with donors and practitioners, ACDI/VOCA has developed a set of 15 briefing papers that draws from both



field experience and research to identify best practices in the application of the value chain approach. ACIDI/VOCA also published a series of 10 case studies from value chain development projects. And the organization developed the Value Chain End-Market Research Toolkit, which educates implementers on the process of end-market research for value chain development and provides a portfolio of tools grounded in case studies that demonstrate their practical application. In addition, there is a three-day value chain workshop curriculum that distills much of the learning to date about good practice in value chain development and identifies remaining challenges.

Recently, K&P II has been conducting significant research and generating resources to improve the capacity of value chain development programs to integrate the very poor into market opportunities. These have included a discussion paper on applying key principles of the value chain approach in market-driven projects that seek to reach the very poor. A toolkit has been developed that profiles a variety of analytical tools and how they can be used or adapted to reach the very poor.

In November 2011, ACIDI/VOCA issued a competitive call for case studies to examine interventions and approaches to create pathways out of poverty that either “push” the very poor towards productive engagement in markets and/or “pull” the poor into markets. Drawing from key themes in these case studies, ACIDI/VOCA held an E-Consultation in January 2012 to generate discussion and share best practices in reaching the very poor through value chain development.

K&P II also conducted research into the principal financial challenges facing the agricultural and rural sectors and compiled a stocktaking of many innovations in financial services that have been tested over the last five years to address these challenges. The paper, “Rural and Agricultural Finance: Taking Stock of Five Years of Innovations,” uses a framework from the perspective of the demand for finance as it relates to investments and expenses for the household, the value chain, and non-farm enterprises.

Improving Practice

Under K&P II, ACIDI/VOCA is developing tools to improve implementation of the value chain approach. In the spring of 2009, ACIDI/VOCA

USAID'S VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT WIKI

The USAID Value Chain Development Wiki, created under ACIDI/VOCA's K&P II Task Order, comprises more than 100 interactive web pages containing tools and resources on various aspects of value chain development. Developed in collaboration with 50 practitioners, donors and academics, the wiki is intended as both a resource for learning about best practices and a space for sharing information and experiences from the field. The wiki will evolve as feedback is received on additional methods, lessons learned and best practices. Visit the wiki at www.microlinks.org/vcwiki.

helped USAID launch its Value Chain Development Wiki, which now has approximately 200 pages that cover every aspect of the value chain approach and link to hundreds of resources and tools. The wiki includes pages relating the value chain approaches to cross-cutting topics like conflict-affected environments, vulnerable populations and food security. ACIDI/VOCA and its AMAP partners developed several tools to assist practitioners in using a facilitation approach to value chain development. These include tools on the roles and capacities needed for market facilitation, strategies for bringing about behavior change, and tips to using a portfolio approach for private sector development.

ACIDI/VOCA also disseminates learning through value chain development workshops, at which USAID missions and their implementing partners share approaches, best practices and lessons learned in project implementation. In 2011, ACIDI/VOCA conducted eight trainings related to the value chain approach for USAID staff and implementing partners. Through K&P II, ACIDI/VOCA has been developing online training modules, the first of which was titled “Learning Value Chain Basics.” Other workshops will focus on using a facilitation approach to implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

All publications and materials produced for USAID under the AMAP BDS project can be found online at www.acdivoca.org/valuechains and www.microlinks.org.

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