



**How LLocal can we go?**

**Democratizing systems tools  
on the journey to self-  
reliance.**

*Presentation to USAID's Local Systems Community  
Washington DC, 13 December 2018*



# Presentation Agenda

1. About LINC
2. Our subjective experience with systems tools to-date
3. Systems thinking milestones and challenges
4. Bangladesh Case
5. Local Systems Practice
6. Discussion



# About LINC

LINC is a US-based small business that assists local and international organizations to design effectively, increase institutional capacity, forge lasting partnerships, and measure impact.

- ❖ Dedicated to strengthening local systems and actors
- ❖ Working in 17 countries with local and international partners
- ❖ Organizational Development, Training, Program Design & Evaluation, and Resource Mobilization
- ❖ Committed to learning and sharing to improve results

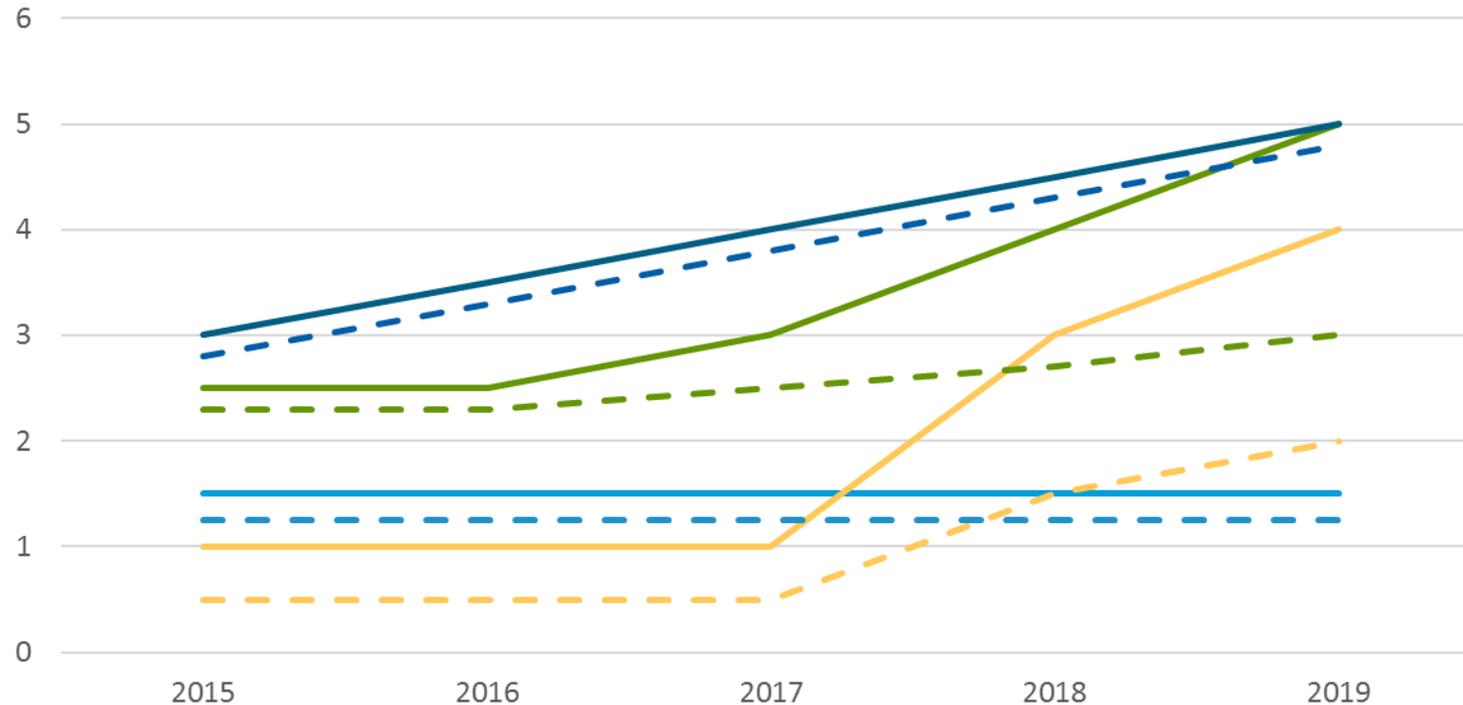


**Our subjective experiences with  
systems approaches to-date**

Our subjective experiences with systems approaches to-date

# Interest and capacity

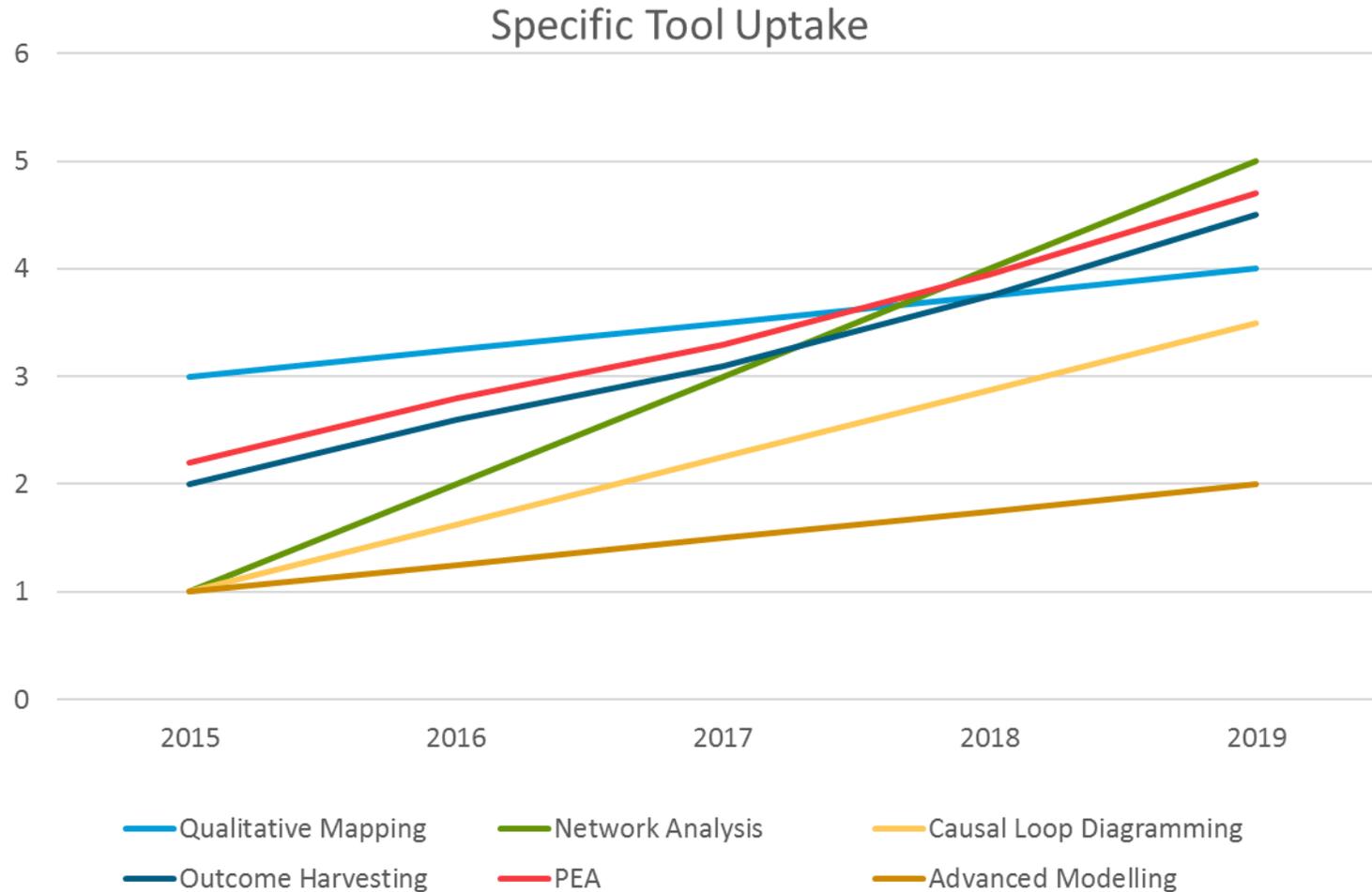
Interest in and Capacity to Undertake Systems Approaches



<i>INTEREST</i>	— Local Orgs	— USAID / Donors	<i>INTEREST</i>
	— US Contractors / INGOs	— Boutique Consultants	
<i>CAPACITY</i>	- - Local Orgs.	- - USAID / Donors	<i>CAPACITY</i>
	- - US Contractor / INGOs	- - Boutique Consultnts	

Our subjective experiences with systems approaches to-date

# The tools gaining traction



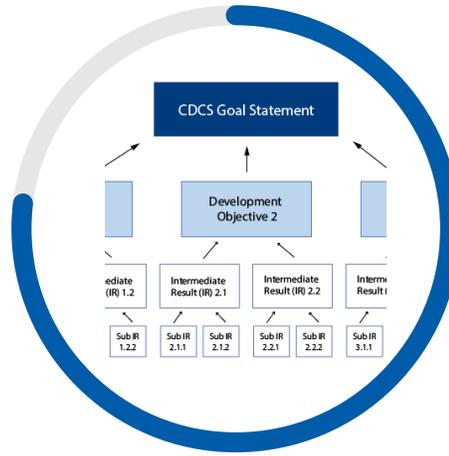


# Systems thinking milestones and challenges

# Key milestones



**PROOF OF CONCEPT /  
MAINSTREAMING SYSTEMS  
THINKING**



**PROGRAM DESIGN**



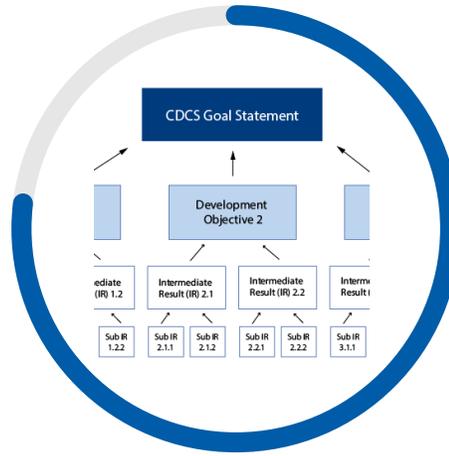
**GENERATING WIDESPREAD  
INTEREST**

Systems thinking milestones and challenges

# Persistent challenges



**ASSESSING IMPACT OF  
SYSTEMS APPROACHES  
OVER TIME**



**PROJECT / ACTIVITY  
MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS**



**INSTITUTIONALIZING  
ADAPTIVE APPROACHES**

# Persistent challenges (cont'd)



**APPLICATIONS TO  
MONITORING AND  
EVALUATION**



**ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**



**PLAYING WELL WITH  
OTHERS**



# BANGLADESH CASE

# Overview

**The partner:** INGO staff of ACDI-VOCA Bangladesh Country Office

**The activity:** A collaboration of SPACES MERL and the Bangladesh Rice and Diversified Crops (RDC) activity

**The challenge:**

- Help the project capture systems dynamics over the life of project
- Cost-effective integration systems tools into traditional MEL systems
- Train and transfer to local staff for implementation over time
- Win the field team over to systems MEL

**The tool(s):**

- Network analysis
- Qualitative systems analysis
- Traditional monitoring processes and forms

**Notable result(s):**

- Network analysis mainstreamed into grantee monitoring processes, tracking linkages and strength of business relationships over time



# Strategy & Lessons

**Engage activity with a mandate and motivation:** The RDC project had a specific mandate to utilize systems thinking and adaptive approaches. The project was newly launched and most staff had limited background in systems thinking. In short, they were motivated.

**Work with highly capable local MEL team:** While all staff were “local”, we partnered with ACIDI-VOCA’s highly capable MEL team of three, all with extensive background in traditional research, data and M&E. However, this was an INGO, not a “local organization” in the classic sense.

**Demonstrate value early:** Monitoring / baseline tools aren’t very compelling to field staff, as they typically don’t generate value until post-intervention. For this reason, we built upfront analysis and program design recommendations into our baseline research. See some design insights in our marketlinks.org post [here](#).

**Provide a roadmap and templates:** We produced a baseline report including several templates that MEL staff could easily utilize in the same format for subsequent network analyses. See the final report and templates [here](#).



<https://www.marketlinks.org/post/how-can-i-conduct-more-meaningful-market-systems-analysis-check-your-ego>

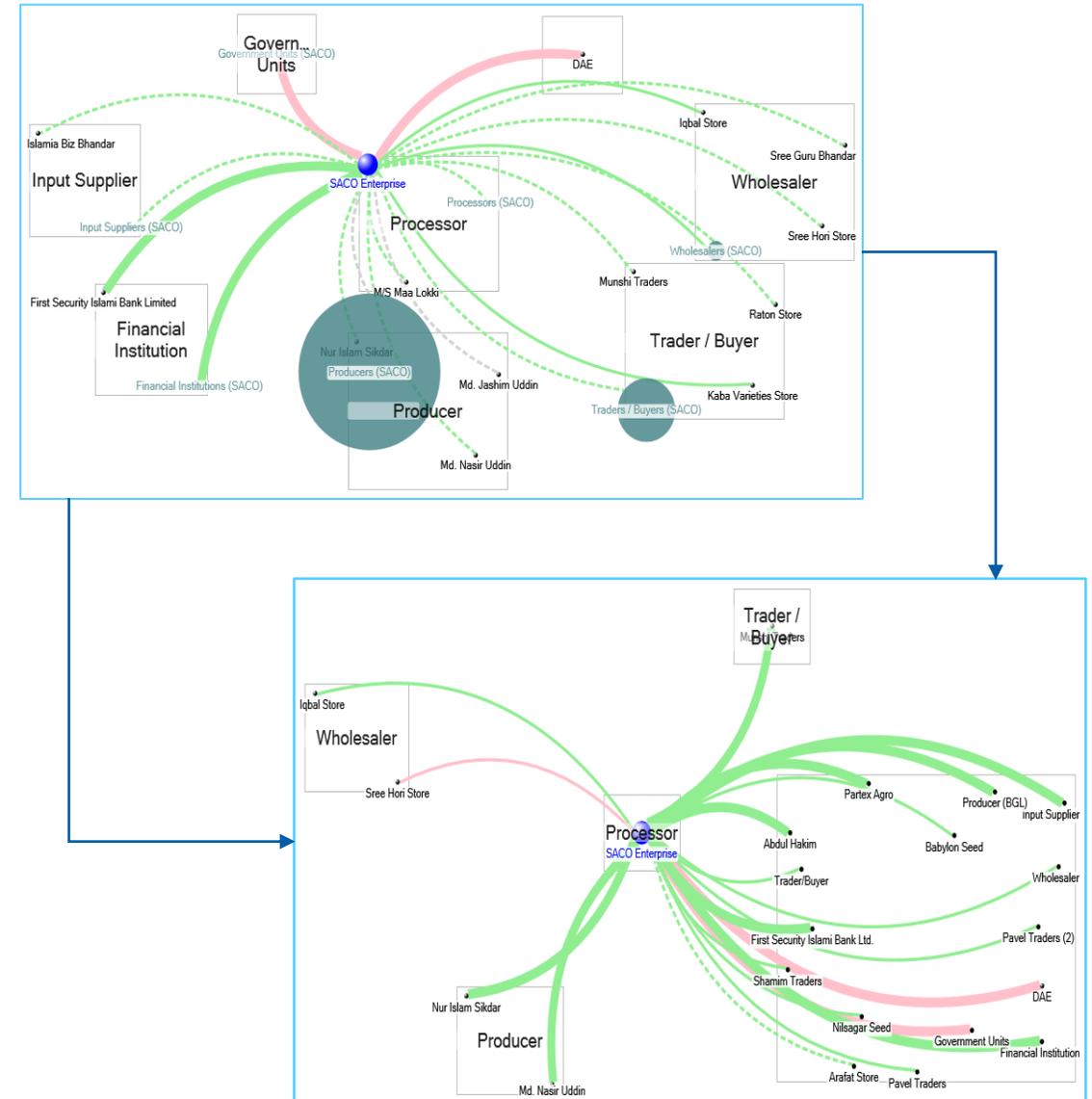
## Bangladesh case

# Strategy & Lessons

**Integrate network data collection with routine monitoring activities and forms:** RDC staff now conduct before and after monitoring with all lead firm grantees of the project (See example maps at right). All data is collected through one form, meaning no additional expenses.

**Transfer the data platform:** For this activity we utilized an overly complicated combination of [EgoWeb](#), [R](#) and [NodeXL](#). RDC MEL staff owned the data collection and analytical platforms from the beginning, encouraging them to develop a full understanding of them prior to our exit. We recommend [Kumu.io](#) for just about everything these days.

**Train extensively:** We conducted a 2-day training for all staff, another 2-day training for MEL staff, plus several week of on-the-job training and technical assistance over the course of a year. Read more about the training [here](#).





**LOCAL SYSTEMS PRACTICE (LSP)**

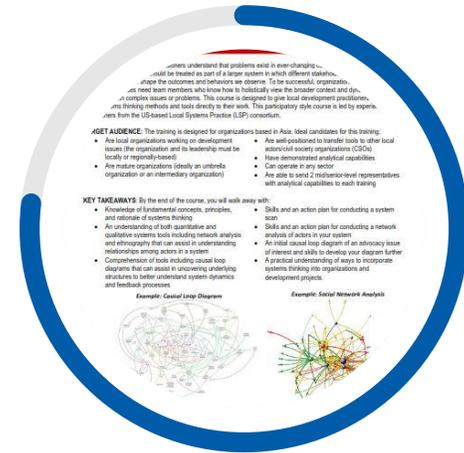
# Experiences so far



**COUNTRY PILOT APPROACH - MOROCCO AND MACEDONIA**



**LSP USER'S GUIDE**  
([www.localsystemspractice.org](http://www.localsystemspractice.org))



**2019 REGIONAL SYSTEMS TRAINING INITIATIVE**  
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# Contact & Questions

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