

2018 Savings Led Working Group Annual Meeting Notes

Date: October 1, 2018

Time: 1:30 – 5:00 pm (EDT)

Over 50 participants attended the annual working group meeting to celebrate recent achievements, explore common challenges, discuss policy and learning priorities, and plan working group activities for 2019.

Part 1: Presentations and Plenary Discussions

- **The Economics of Resilience: Savings Groups in Marginalized Environments**

(Courtenay Cabot Venton, Independent Consultant; Thulli Chapa, World Vision Somalia)

Overview of the experience of Savings Groups programming from the Somalia Resilience Program (SomReP) and main findings of the USAID study on the *Economics of Resilience to Drought in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia* and the experience of Savings Group programming in Somalia, and their implications for Savings Groups.

- **Women's Empowerment through Savings Groups: Designing Tools for Results Measurement** (Amalia Johnson, Nathan Associates)

Progress update and preliminary findings from the evidence and learning partnership on Savings Groups and women's empowerment, supported by the SEEP Network and implemented by Nathan Associates in partnership with CARE International.

Through the partnership, Nathan Associates will develop a learning brief on good practices in the design and monitoring of Savings Group programs for women's empowerment outcomes. In addition, Nathan and its partners will develop a monitoring tool for the measurement of women's empowerment outcomes through Savings Groups. Following an extensive desk review and primary research in East Africa from June to August, national stakeholder meetings were hosted in Tanzania (August 27) and Ethiopia (September 7) to validate preliminary findings and the conceptualization of a common approach for the measurement of women's empowerment in Savings Groups.

- **Savings Groups and the Role of Government**

(Fiona Jarden, CARE International)

The *State of Practice Report: Savings Groups and the Role of Government in Sub-Saharan Africa* catalogues and describes the interventions of national governments in Sub-Saharan Africa related to Savings Groups. Through a desk review, key informant interviews, a call for contributions and various sessions at SG2018, SEEP has identified 74 government initiatives related to Savings Groups, across 20 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. These initiatives are wide ranging and relate to national economic and gender strategies, quality standards, stakeholder coordination, social protection programs and regulation. The session explored the implications for financial inclusion, social protection, and women's economic empowerment.

- **An Empirical Risk Assessment of Savings Groups: Implications for Facilitating Agencies** (Ashley Wheaton, SEEP Network; Courtney O’Connell, World Relief; Marc Bavois, Catholic Relief Services)

The risk assessment – undertaken by SEEP in collaboration with the Aga Khan Foundation, Catholic Relief Services and World Relief – identifies and assesses the incidence and severity of risks to the performance and outcomes of Savings Groups. This evidence-based assessment – a survey of over 1,600 Savings Groups, individual members, trainers and community stakeholders in Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Rwanda and Tanzania – aims to inform the development of targeted consumer protection initiatives for Savings Groups.

Part 2: Review of Activities and Outputs (2016-2018)

The working group mapped out the completed activities and outputs since 2016, across key themes – access to formal finance, consumer protection, fragile states, gender, impact measurement, inclusion, market systems approaches, and technology – including learning briefs, case studies, practitioner toolkits, state of practice reports, peer learning groups, conferences and webinars.

Part 3: 2019 Annual Planning

In 2019, the Savings-Led Working Group commits to lead or contribute to the following learning initiatives that are resourced under existing partnerships:

- Case study series on consumer protection for Savings Groups
 - Building on the recent risk assessment, the SEEP Network is conducting a case study series on Savings Groups and consumer protection. The series will provide a detailed account of various approaches to ensure that members and groups have the capacity to protect themselves, development and market actors act responsibly, and regulation, if required, is effective.
- Learning Brief: Savings Groups and Effective Male Engagement
- Learning Brief: Financing Agriculture – Savings Groups and Smallholder Farmers
- Peer Learning Group: Savings Groups and Social Protection
- Learning Brief: Savings Groups in Fragile and Conflict-affected States
- Case study on the application of a market systems approach to Savings Groups
- Practitioner Toolkit: A comprehensive framework for measuring the long-term, household-level impact of Savings Groups

In addition, the working group identified three learning priorities and associated outputs for further exploration:

- Peer Learning Group: Savings Groups and Refugee Finance
- An impact value statement for SGs, based on “cash benchmarking”
- A mapping of Savings Groups within graduation model programming

The working group identified relevant experience and technical resources to contribute to these collaborative learning initiatives. If you expressed interest in any of these at the Annual Meeting, we will be following up. And all working group members are invited to express interest at any time, at slwg@seepnetwork.org.