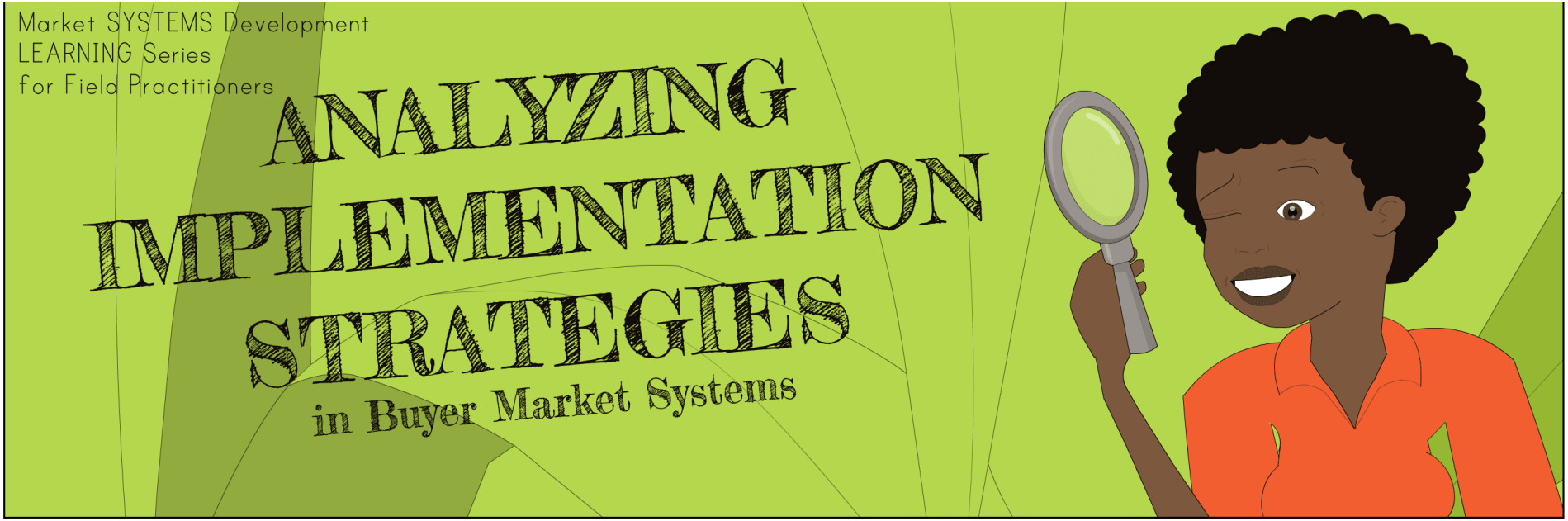
Find the full cartoon learning series at: https://www.microlinks.org/library/cartoon-learning-series



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

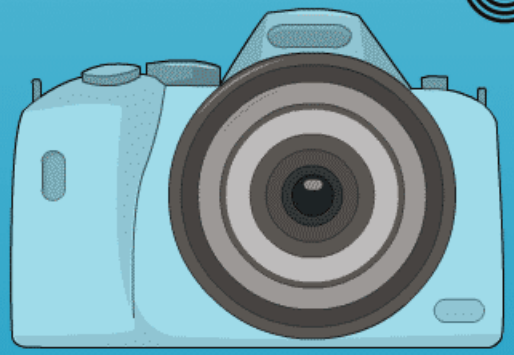
Produced by EcoVentures International
for USAID's Leveraging Economic Opportunities (LEO) project

LEO
Leveraging Economic Opportunities

I'm a smallholder farmer trying to make ends meet.
I work for a donor-funded project.
I'm a local buyer buying crops to process in my factory.

What does the State of the Market System often look like?

CLICK



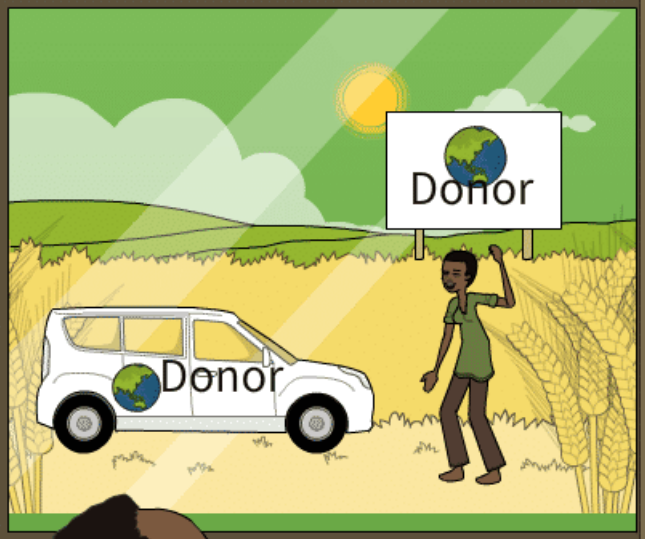
Confrontational business relationships
are the norm ...
with everyone only looking out for themselves.

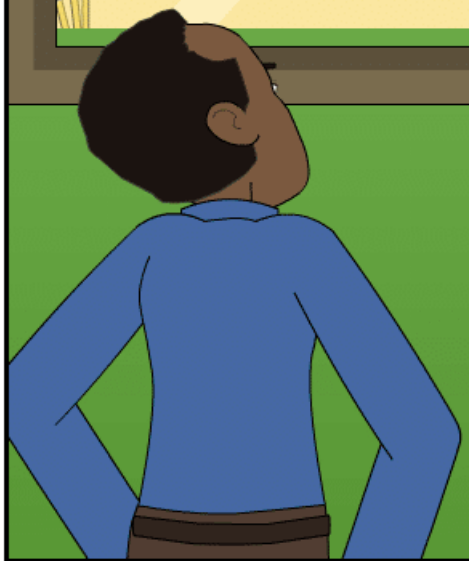
A few buyers/processors get richer while their farmer suppliers and other firms get poorer, with increasing lack of trust.

There are no processes to continually build and reinforce trust & relationships between businesses and organizations. The market system does not improve and provide a fair return.

Project-focused Approach?

Market-focused Approach?





If we used different approaches to strengthen the market to benefit farmers ....

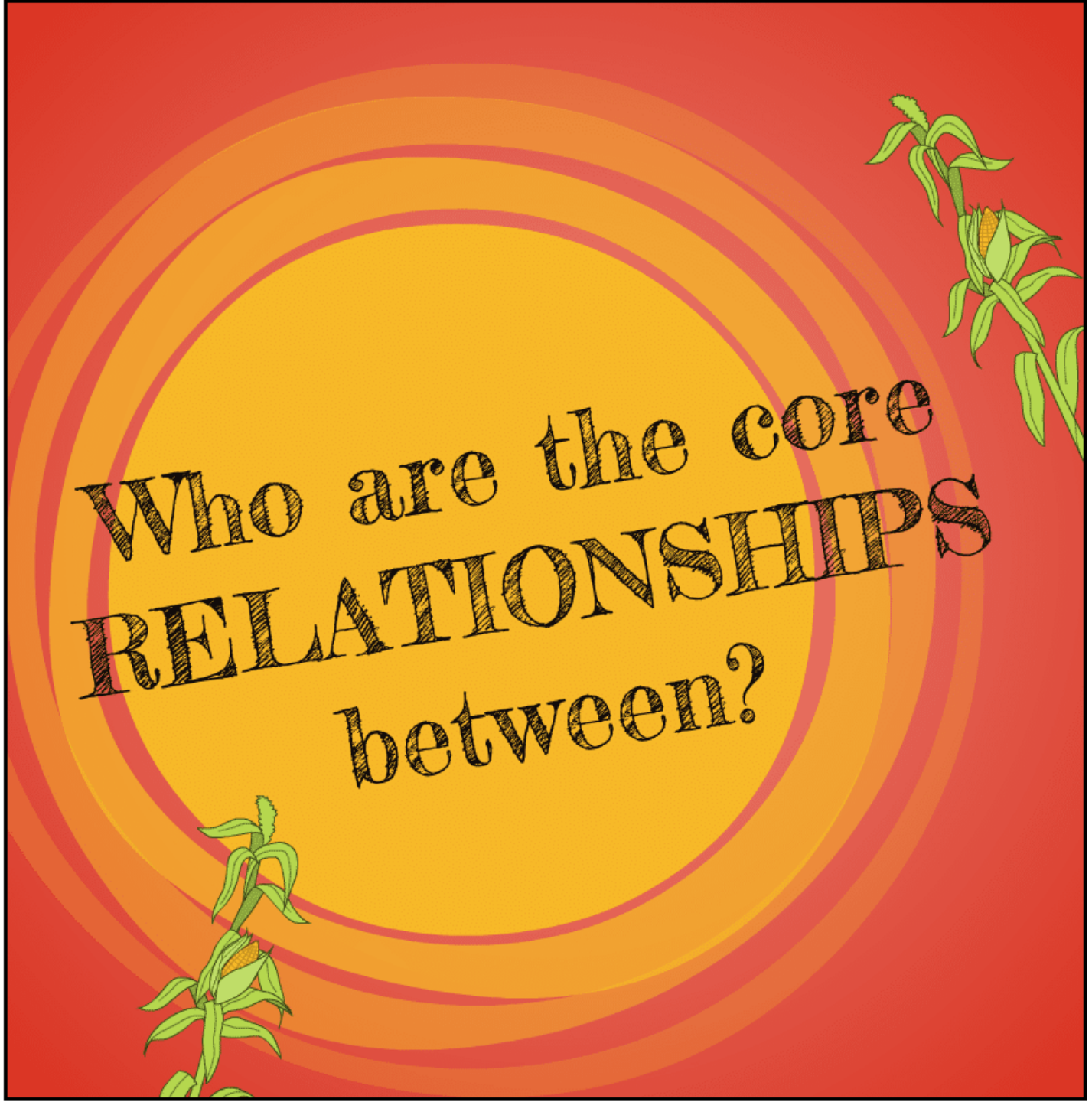
How can we understand what might be happening to the market system?

To see if the market is improving, I'll think about ...
... Who are the main RELATIONSHIPS between in the activities that our project is supporting?
... Who feels OWNERSHIP of the activities supported by our project?
... What is the level of INTENSITY (level of resources and roles) that the project takes on?

Relationships?
Ownership?
Intensity?

Let's look at what the story might look like if we used a project-focused approach!

Project-
focused
Approach?


Who are the core
RELATIONSHIPS
between?

The project has relationships with farmers and with buyers.
Farmers and buyers remain distant.

Who has
OWNERSHIP of
the activities?

The PROJECT takes on all of the key roles - strategy designer, aggregator, farmer relational manager.

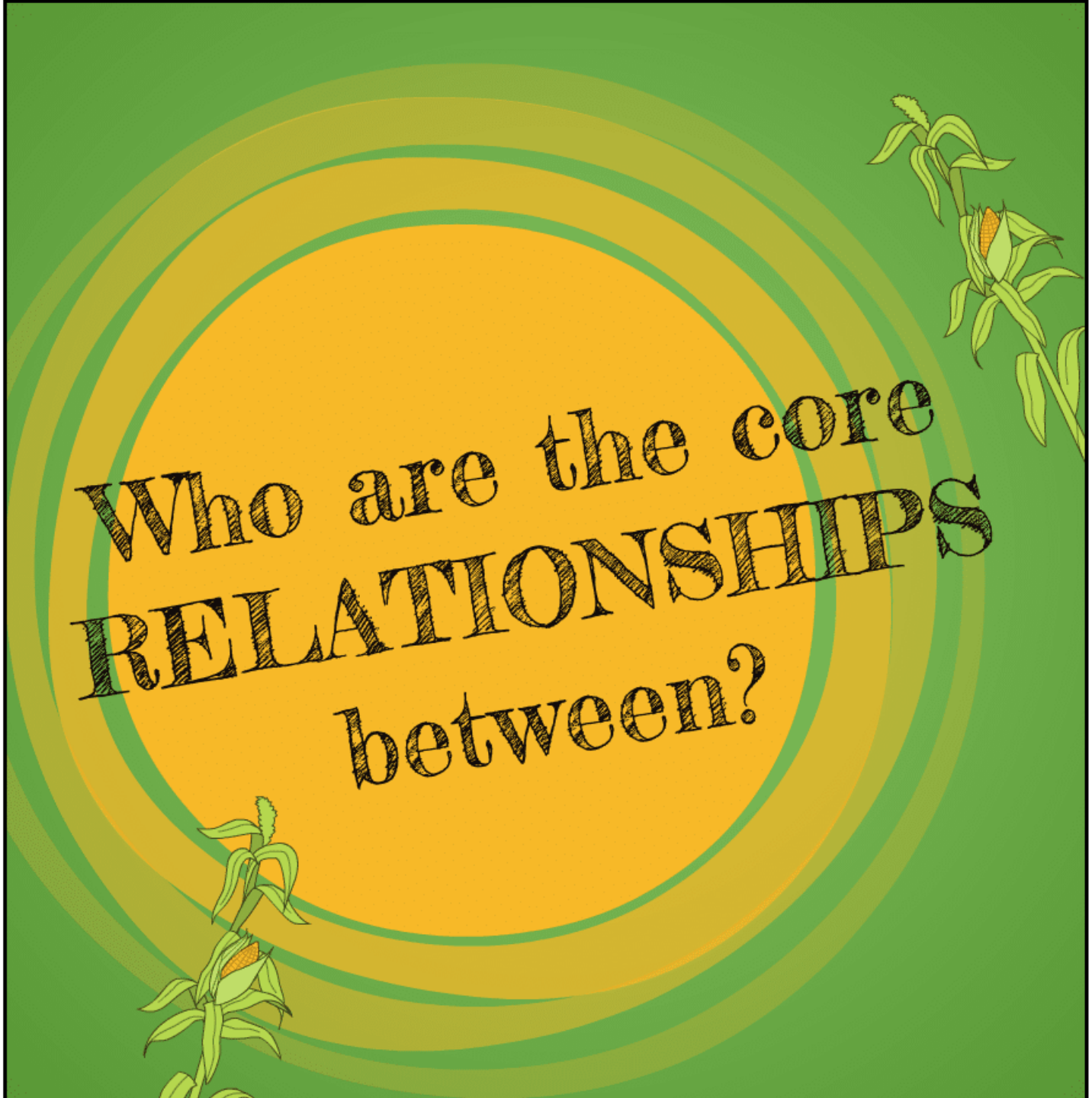
What is the level of INTENSITY* that the project takes on?

* Level of resources and roles

Highly intense and highly visible PROJECT roles.
High costs to cover staff functions and
unexpected expenses.

Let's look at what the story might look like if we used a market-focused approach!

Market-
focused
Approach?


Who are the core
RELATIONSHIPS
between?

The relationship starts between the project and buyers ... but the support is based on the BUYERS developing more loyal FARMER supplier networks with resulting farmer to farmer relationships.

Who has
OWNERSHIP of
the activities?

BUYERS have to show ownership.
Project mentors - decreasing its role over time.
The project stops supporting buyers that show disinterest or are not benefiting farmers.

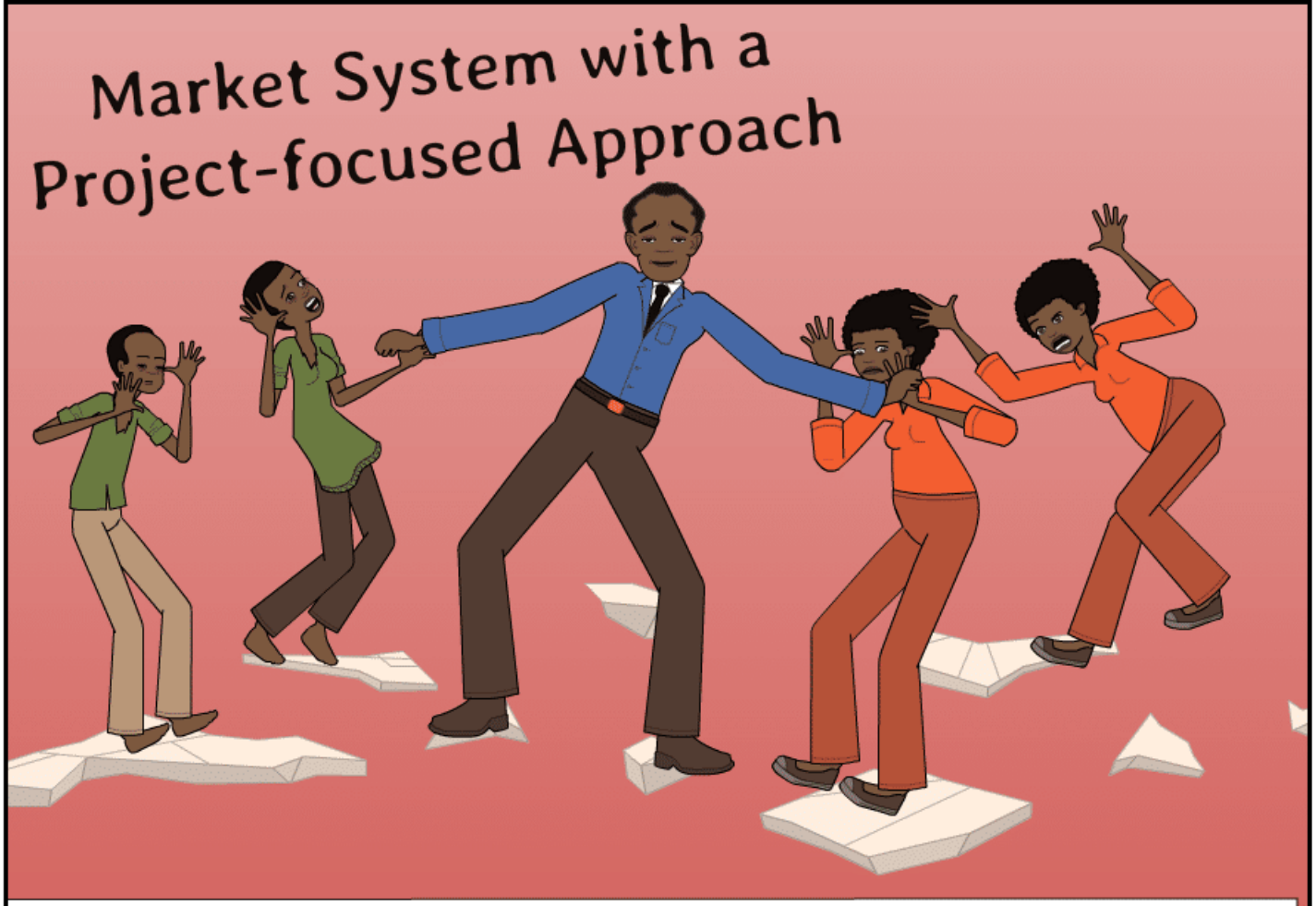
New firms that the project works with will often have to demonstrate a higher level of ownership sooner.

What is the level of INTENSITY* that the project takes on?

* Level of resources and roles

High level of intensity that declines over time as the BUYERS take on the functions completely.

Project-focused Approach?
Market-focused Approach?
WHAT MIGHT THE MARKET SYSTEM LOOK LIKE?



The project plays a temporary role trying to connect various businesses and organizations
... amid continuing confrontational relationships & mistrust.

The project leads from the front ...

The project is the agent of change ...

The project facilitates a resilient market system that continually reorganizes to build and reinforce trust and relationships to ultimately benefit all.

The project facilitates discreetly from behind ...

Businesses and organizations are the agents of change...

HOW CAN YOU APPLY SIMILIAR ANALYSIS TO YOUR OWN PROJECT DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION?
Relationships?
Ownership?
Intensity?