



Pollen Group Curriculum Vitae

About Pollen Group

Pollen Group, a former Engineers Without Borders Canada (EWB) venture, is a consulting firm based in East Africa that exists to support development sector implementers and donors drive effectiveness and sustainability in their interventions. We do this in two main ways:

(1) We embed our staff with development implementers, and help them institutionalize a systems-change approach. This is a more flexible, light-touch approach to development that helps practitioners and organisations recognize, analyse and account for all of the factors influencing a particular intervention area. The outcome is a much more comprehensive view of change – a systemic view – that leads to more creative and sustainable development practices, and impact across entire sectors, as opposed to focusing on individual beneficiaries. We also offer shorter-term targeted skill-building, supporting building M&E systems to capture systemic change and market systems diagnostics services.

(2) Along with the organisations that we engage with, we work to share knowledge gathered across the sector. Put bluntly, one organisation practicing a systems-change approach is excellent, but there is a larger potential impact. By sharing knowledge (online, through workshops, consultancy, and conferences) we're able to use our experience, and the experience of the organisations that we engage with, to increase sustainable development practices across the entire development sector.

In this way, Pollen Group applies a combined for-profit and non-profit approach. We are funded by both grants and payment for embedded expertise, but also share information and hold knowledge-sharing events for the development sector pro bono. Our goal is greater sustainable impact – this model allows us to realize this goal in both a 'hands-on' and 'influence' role.

Our work spans public and private sector interventions, as we believe systems change requires both. We have worked with donors, NGOs, and the private sector, including USAID, DfID, Mercy Corps, SwissContact, TechnoServe, Adam Smith International, TetraTech ARD, ACDI/VOCA, Kenya Markets Trust, SEEP network, BEAM Exchange, GOAL Uganda, BRAC Maendeleo-Tanzania, East Africa Dairy Development Programme, and Financial Services Deepening Africa, among others. Pollen Group's experience encompasses the agricultural, animal health, WASH, and financial service sectors across sub-Saharan Africa.

Vision

Our vision is to see a dynamic network of innovative, market-focused development practitioners in East Africa that are taking a systems-change approach. This network will focus on a shared and continuously adapting understanding of the systemic constraints to performance of both public and private sector actors in evolving and supporting markets for the poor. At the level of an individual organisation, this involves continuous improvement in staff and organisational capacity and adaptive management for learning.

Components of Our Service

Pollen Group employs a unique model of embedded service provision to organisations taking a market-focused approach to their work. This can take a number of forms:

- Medium to long-term embedded support for:
 - Building the capacity of field staff and middle management to understand and utilize the 'Making Markets Work for the Poor' (M4P) or market systems development approach
 - Creating an effective learning organisation – i.e., testing and piloting strategies to improve organisational communication and management, and working with management to scale those that are successful
 - Co-designing and iterating on strategy with field and management

- Specialized support for monitoring and evaluation or knowledge management systems, including results chains, systemic impact evaluation, and how to integrate learning into strategy
- Market systems mapping and research to facilitate strategy development and influence the development sector's policies, incentives and practices
- Targeted capacity building on key tactics or skill sets, typically through a combination of workshops and staff coaching
- Organisational diagnostics, to determine strengths and challenges in conducting market systems development

Pollen Group's Recent Work

Adam Smith International: GROW Programme (Liberia)

December 2015 – Present

Pollen Group has been contracted to work alongside the GROW team and a member of Adam Smith International's central PSD Technical Support Unit to update and revise a series of market systems analyses and intervention plans to a high standard with adherence to the principles of market systems development.

GOAL Uganda: Driving Youth-led New Agribusiness and Microenterprise (DYNAMIC) (Uganda)

November 2015 – Present

Pollen Group is currently conducting a secondary research project with the DYNAMIC team meant to inform programming over the next five years as well as ascertain where data gaps exist where primary data collection will be needed. Pollen Group also trained all 40+ DYNAMIC team staff in the Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) approach.

Collaborative Group for the Alleviation of Poverty (CGAP) (Francophone West Africa)

October 2015 – Present

Pollen Group is currently conducting a mixed-method diagnostic study meant to inform the design of CGAP's financial inclusion work in the French West African economic zone (WAEMU). The study identifies root causes of the financial sector's under-performance – especially with regard to access to digital financial services - and potential entry points for intervention, likely at the level of policy and banking regulation.

BEAM Exchange (Remote)

August 2015 – September 2015

Pollen Group was contracted to develop the technical M4P content pages for the newly launched BEAM Exchange website. These pages serve as a go-to for M4P practitioners to easily find frameworks, case studies, and more, structured from the initial research phase of a program to all stages in implementation.

University of Edinburgh: Social Enterprises for Economic Development Programme (Rwanda)

August 2015 – Present

SEED is a five-year, DFID-funded research programme being implemented by University of Edinburgh and H2O Venture Partners. Pollen Group has been engaged to create the program's performance management system, work with H2O's social enterprises to help them measure their progress to impact, and develop tools to assess the systemic change achieved by SEED overall.

MUSIKA Development Initiatives (Zambia)

August 2015

A Pollen Group consultant supported a review of MUSIKA's current M&E systems to ensure that they accurately reflect the programme's facilitative approach, behaviour change amongst key actors, beneficiary-level change, and overall system-level change within focus agricultural markets in Zambia.

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation: Rural Livelihood Development Programme (Tanzania)

May 2015 – December 2015

Two Pollen Group consultants were embedded within RLDP's offices in Tanzania to support the programme in capitalizing on experiences applying an M4P approach in Tanzania's central corridor for the past eight years. The first component included research and the drafting of case studies that capture the programme's

learning on project cycle management, gender dynamics in agriculture, and contract farming. The second component involved support to the M&E team synthesizing relevant data on the impact of its programme over its lifetime and to share project knowledge within the M4P community of practice.

Adam Smith International: Sierra Leone Opportunities for Business Action (SOBA) (Sierra Leone)

April 2015 – June 2015

Pollen Group was contracted to support the SOBA programme in an initial short-term, high intensity coaching role as the team transitions back into normal working operations after the recent Ebola outbreak.

TechnoServe (TNS) Kenya: Agriculture Development Portfolio (Kenya)

March 2015 – Present

A Pollen Group consultant is currently embedded with the ADP to support a review of their current M&E systems to ensure that they accurately reflect the programme's facilitative approach, behaviour change amongst key actors, beneficiary-level change, and overall system-level change within the dairy market system in Kenya. Support also includes development and piloting of new M&E tools, as well as recruitment, training and on-going coaching of M&E staff.

The SEEP Network (Washington DC; Malawi)

March 2015 - November 2015

The SEEP Network contracted Pollen Group to support in the development of conference framing and content. As a follow-on to the conference, Pollen Group designed and facilitated a 4-day introductory M4P training in Lilongwe, Malawi targeted to SEEP Network members including implementers and donors. This training focused on the underlying concepts of M4P, frameworks for implementation design, and principles on facilitative implementation styles.

Financial Sector Deepening (FSD) Africa: FSD Academy (South Africa)

February 2015 – May 2015

Pollen Group was recently contracted to provide support to FSDA in (1) designing and delivering a training course ("FSD Academy") that focuses on the market facilitation (M4P) approach within the context of financial markets in developing countries; and (2) conducting a review of its partnership with MIX, an information services provider focused on microfinance and other financial services offered to the poor across the world.

East Africa Dairy Development (EADD) II (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania)

January 2015 – February 2015; October 2015

Pollen Group designed and facilitated an introductory M4P training to implementing staff in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, followed by an adaptive management workshop with EADD senior management.

Practical Action (PA) Eastern Africa (Kenya)

December 2014 - May 2015

Pollen Group was engaged to assist PA Eastern Africa's Food, Agriculture and Disaster Risk Reduction (FADRR) team develop a new strategy for promoting market systems change in the livestock sector in north-western Kenya and north-eastern Uganda (Karamoja cluster). This consisted of a mixed-method market systems mapping, including secondary and primary research, training of key staff in the M4P approach; and a concept note development workshop to finalize intervention strategies and identify funding opportunities.

GOAL Uganda (Uganda)

November 2014 – December 2015

Pollen Group conducted a series of mixed-method diagnostic studies to inform the design of GOAL's WASH and Sustainable Livelihoods programmes in eastern Uganda. The study identifies root causes of the WASH sector's under-performance and potential entry points for intervention by GOAL, which both stimulate economic activity in the target areas and represent sustainable future market systems.

KPMG: Financial Sector Deepening (FSD) Uganda (Uganda)

November 2014

This 5-day training course for KPMG staff on the Financial Sector Deepening Uganda project focused on

several key components, including the underlying theories of market systems development, facilitation tactics, and the organisational implications of adaptive management. This initial training is being followed by several days of coaching with key staff on strengthening specific skills, tools or strategies.

BRAC Tanzania: LEAD Programme (Tanzania)

September 2014 – October 2014

Pollen Group consultants designed a 5-day workshop for BRAC's Livelihood Enhancement through Agricultural Development (LEAD) programme, reinforcing basic market facilitation principles. The majority of the 80+ participants were field-level project officers, and focused on light and heavy facilitation tactics, and interacting with market actors.

TechnoServe USA (Remote)

May 2014 – September 2014

TechnoServe hired Pollen Group for a two-part study. The first component focused on a synthesis of the latest thinking on market systems development, utilizing a mixed methodology of literature review and key informant interviews. The second component focused on an analysis of two TechnoServe programmes in Mozambique and Zambia, and Rwanda and Ethiopia, respectively. The analysis focused on their application of market systems thinking and facilitative tactics. This culminated in a webinar with key personnel to share findings.

Swisscontact Uganda: Making Markets Work For Uganda Project (Uganda)

September 2013 – March 2014

An embedded Pollen Group consultant worked closely with the Making Markets Work for Uganda (M4U) team on:

- Training, coaching and mentoring on principles of business models that provide commercially-oriented market solutions; piloting these models to test scalability
- Tactics for engaging the private sector: how to communicate, negotiate, and structure agreements that prompt private sector actors to upgrade their businesses and invest in their value chains
- Refining of M&E and learning systems to support project goals, co-development and refinement of results chains and indicators, and incorporation of results chains into project learning.

Kenya Markets Trust (KMT): Market Assistance Programme (Kenya)

March 2013 – September 2014

Pollen Group consultants tested, iterated, and scaled initiatives (trainings, processes, ideas, messages) that promoted specific staff's capacity towards effective market engagement. This included:

- Supporting human resources on professional development activities, such as internal trainings and orientation programme, including developing market systems development-oriented training materials
- Co-developing a strategic planning process with middle management for engaging with market actors
- One-on-one field staff coaching on practical tactics of market facilitation
- Working with M&E team to build results chains and systems to evaluate systemic impact, as well as knowledge management processes and a learning culture which supported adaptive planning and implementation

TetraTech: Feed the Future Agricultural Inputs Activity (Uganda)

January 2013 – September 2014

Pollen Group worked on organisational design, staff hiring and training, and culture-setting during the start-up phase of the programme, followed by embedded change management to cement behaviours.

Pollen Group consultants:

- Designed job descriptions and interview processes with senior management to ensure the right mix of staff skills, attitudes, and personality to enable learning and market facilitation
- Developed an organisational change management framework that articulated the types of behaviours to be encouraged in the project team (e.g., open communication, experimentation) and the tools/processes which would encourage them

- Co-facilitated a 4-day training, orientation, team-building, and strategic planning programme with the project's Chief-of-Party, followed by support for quarterly review meetings as well as annual review and planning process
- Provided on-going coaching to field staff for 6 months to promote the development of key skills and capacities of a market facilitator
- Worked on the design, testing and institutionalization of an M&E system to capture systemic change

Mercy Corps Uganda: Northern Karamoja Growth, Health, and Governance Programme (Uganda)

January 2013 – March 2014

Pollen Group consultants worked with a newly hired team and the Chief of Party to:

- Deliver initial and on-going training, coaching, and mentorship to staff on the M4P (Making Markets Work for the Poor) approach, including detailed tactics of facilitation such as designing cost share agreements, partner selection, and negotiation
- Design and institutionalize learning processes, such as quarterly strategic reviews, after action reports, and tracking behaviour change in market players
- Develop results chains (DCED standard) to manage for market systems change
- Promote a culture of learning, experimentation, and flexibility in the implementing team

TetraTech: Livelihoods and Enterprises for Agricultural Development (LEAD) Programme (Uganda)

March 2012 – June 2013

Pollen Group consultants joined LEAD to support the shift from a 'direct delivery' to a facilitative, market systems development project. This involved:

- Thorough analysis of both the organisational and individual staff capacity for market facilitation
- Presented to USAID Uganda mission on the results of the organisational assessment for LEAD, emphasizing the key roles of staff and organisational capacity in enabling effective implementation of market systems development
- Worked with project staff to develop and adjust results chains, incorporate higher levels of business thinking, employ flexible tactics for working with private sector actors (lead firms), and guide through the scale-up or "crowding in" phase

Mercy Corps Uganda: Revitalizing Agricultural Incomes in New Markets (RAIN) Programme (Uganda)

September 2012 – May 2013

Completed organisational diagnostic assessment to identify organisational and staff strengths and gaps, leading to a year-long, embedded placement for one Pollen Group consultant. Work over the year included:

- Designing results chains to reflect a long-term business enabling strategy, and monitoring and evaluation tools to reflect an M4P approach
- Designing M4P training for all staff
- One-on-one coaching/mentoring for middle management in how to support a team of staff conducting market systems development
- Dissemination of tools and frameworks to improve staff effectiveness

Selected Publications & Presentations

“Learning with the Toolmakers Webinar: The Offer Arsenal” -<http://www.seepnetwork.org/blog/learning-toolmaker-webinar-1-offer-arsenal>

“Navigating Complexity: Adaptive Management at the Northern Karamoja Growth, Health and Governance Programme” - <http://beamexchange.org/en/resource-detail/resource/169/>

“Adapting Lean Thinking to Market System Development” - <http://www.seepnetwork.org/adapting-lean-thinking-to-market-systems-development--principles-and-practices-for-donors-funders-resources-1315.php>

“Organisational Capacity: Why the Value Chain Approach May Fail”
<https://www.microlinks.org/library/organisational-capacity-why-value-chain-approach-may-fail-screencast-and-presentation>

“Creating Manageable Steps for Complex Systemic Change: A Guide for Market Facilitation Practitioners”
https://www.microlinks.org/sites/microlinks/files/resource/files/Creating_Manageable_Steps.pdf

“Network Mapping in Market Systems: Understanding and Visualizing Complex, Dynamic Systems”
https://www.microlinks.org/sites/microlinks/files/resource/files/Guidelines_for_Network_Mapping.pdf

“Market Facilitation in Practice: Case Studies for Implementers”
https://usaidelearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/Market_Facilitation_Case_Studies.pdf

“Being a Market Facilitator: A Guide to Staff Roles and Capacities”
https://www.microlinks.org/sites/microlinks/files/resource/files/Being_Market_Facilitator_Guide.pdf

“Organisational Diagnostic for Market Facilitation: Assessing Your Organisation's Understanding of What to Do and How to Do It”
https://www.microlinks.org/sites/microlinks/files/resource/files/Organisational_Diagnostic.pdf

“Driving Organisational Change: Taking the Value Chain Approach from Principles to Practice”
<https://www.microlinks.org/events/breakfast-seminars/driving-organisational-change-taking-value-chain-approach-principles-pract>

“A Practitioner's Guide to Market Facilitation: Facilitation as Behavior Change”
https://www.microlinks.org/sites/microlinks/files/resource/files/Behaviour%20Change%20and%20Facilitation_EWB_WorkingDocument.pdf

“Building Blocks of Learning Organisations” <https://usaidelearninglab.org/events/building-blocks-learning-organisations-enabling-flexible-adaptive-development-programming>