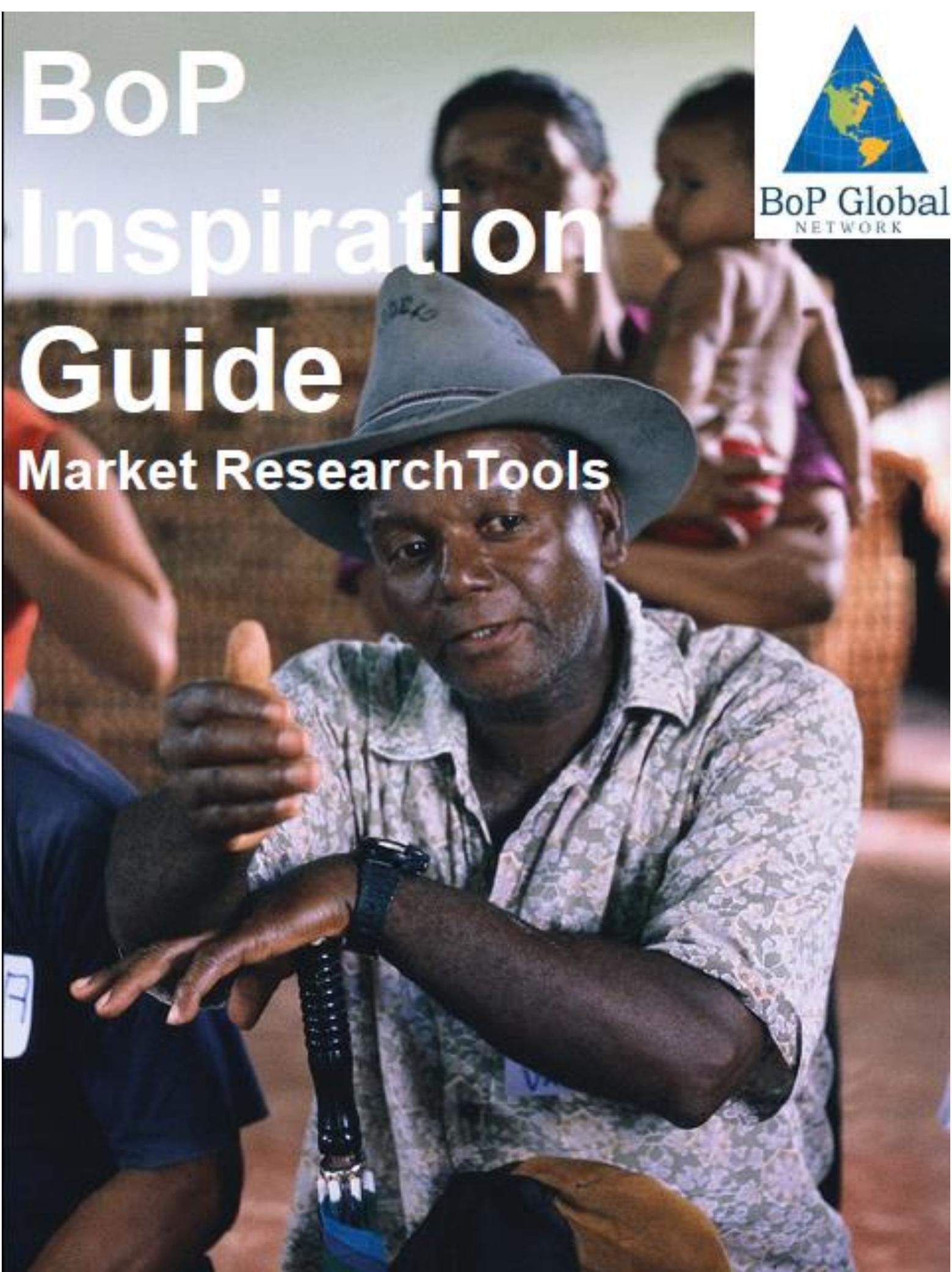


BoP Inspiration Guide

Market Research Tools



BoP Global
NETWORK



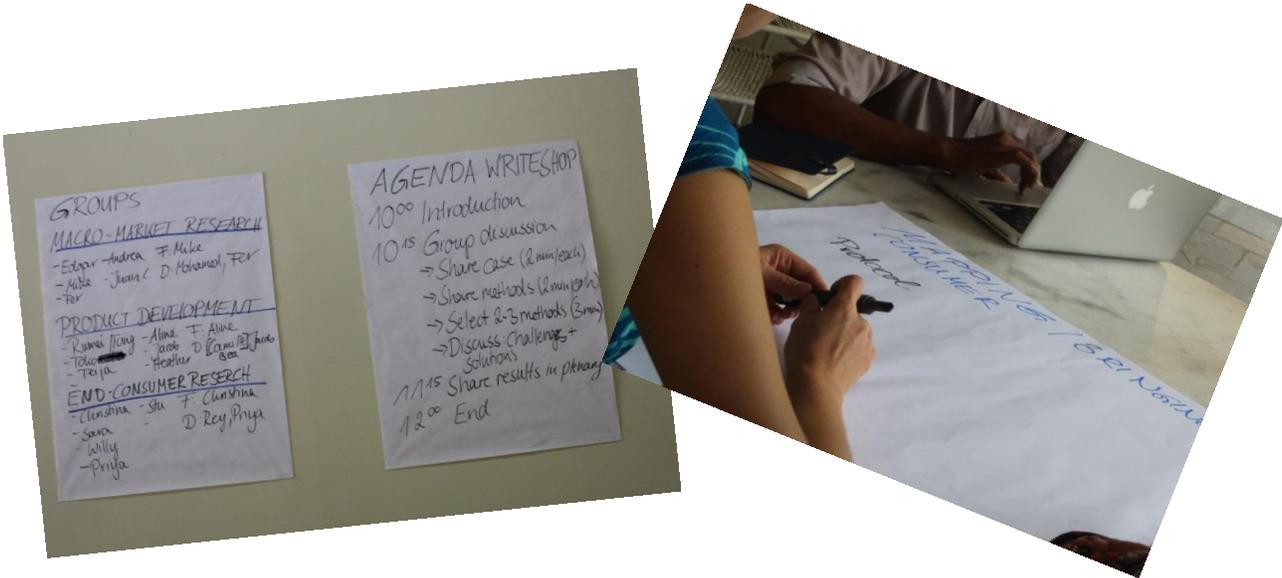
BACKGROUND

In November 2013, we BoP Learning Labs from around the globe will gather in Brazil, on the beautiful island of Ilhabela. Instead of just networking and making plans, this time, we want to create something together. With the collective intelligence and experience of 20 Lab leaders in an inspiring place, we are sure that we can lay the groundwork for more productive and creative collaboration in the next decade.

The first BoP Learning Lab that began in the US was a consortium of companies, NGOs, entrepreneurs, multilateral organizations, and academics working to discover and implement business solutions to global poverty. Established in 2000, it grew out of the research and writings of Dr. Stuart Hart in the late 1990s. Today, the Labs represent a vibrant community of academics and practitioners in 18 countries that engage in knowledge creation and dissemination about the theory and practice of creating sustainable businesses at the base of the economic pyramid.

With a focus on concept, theory and practice of the emerging field of BoP enterprise development, they have three primary purposes:

- 1) Generate specific action research.
- 2) Disseminate knowledge through workshops, seminars, conferences, case studies, publications and the media.
- 3) Identify, design, incubate and promote innovative business models with companies and other stakeholders that will improve the social and economic lifestyles of BoP communities.





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1. INTRODUCTION: KEY TAKE-AWAYS FOR MARKET RESEARCH AT THE BoP

Project-Based and Research-Based Approaches

"You have two different approaches: what the company demands and what we want also"

Edgard, FGV, Brazil

- Taking the time to conduct proper research on the field, including non-participatory observation is critical. This is consistent with the BoP protocol, the first phase of which is to gain trust within local communities.
 - On the one hand, it is crucial for the labs to conduct **more extensive, in-depth research with multiple objectives** rather than launching several small-scale research projects, with narrow context-specific objectives.
 - On the other hand, funding and time constraints may hinder the viability of large research option.
- **The project-based approach should be broader, the research-based approach should be deeper**
- **Ideals vs. Realities:** combine long-term research (through academia, students) and short-term projects (with companies) to build real, tangible and consistent knowledge.
- **Use the network:** create collaborative and joint research efforts to apply for larger, longer term research grants.

Be Holistic

"Go beyond what you first see"

Mike, Inclusive Business Sweden, Sweden

- **Use different methods** to strengthen results and obtain consensual findings
 - In-depth preliminary research is critical, especially if infield research will take place over a short period of time.
- **Process is key:** Start with one method but stay flexible, adapt and learn from the process and the failures.
- **Test tools and methods** in different contexts
 - For example, by tapping into low-income communities in home countries to verify the understandability and functionality of the used research tools.

- **Define the right team to do research:** mix of students (flexible and open view), experts (knowledge) and local researchers (understanding of the context)
- **Market research = Marketing:** it is not possible to separate the two, because market research and marketing are very connected when it comes to the BoP.

"When a company enters a BoP community for market research, the company already creates expectations with that product and that brand"

Christina, Endeava, Germany

Develop Intuition

"How do you build intuition in a context that you don't really understand?"

Priya, Emergent Institute, India

- **Expand the value proposition:** through experienced intuition in the field, look beyond basic product functionality and towards the context in which it is embedded. Take into account life experiences through iterations.
- **Testing:** allow people to experiment the product
- **Build Trust:**
 - Infield research and staying a long time in the community are the only effective ways to develop trust and optimize communication and the flow of information.
 - Gifting is effective to address mistrust
- **Develop a stronger awareness of biases and prejudice** through a flexible, open-minded analysis of the research findings and a critical approach towards secondary research
 - For example: what may have a seemingly common perspective in a developed country context may have very different connotation for low-income customers in a BoP context (ex: parking lots)

2. END CONSUMER RESEARCH

The aim of the chapter “End Consumer Research” is to support future market research of the labs to capture consumer behavior, market potential, and consumer’s willingness to pay at the BoP based on prototyping methods to “**bring the consumer in**” and exemplified by the following four case-studies:

Germany: Understanding the Demand for Energy Services in Rural Madagascar



On behalf of a German social investor, Endeva conducted research with end consumers in rural villages of Madagascar. The research aimed to understand current uses, sources and spendings on energy, as well as potential uses of clean energy, willingness to spend and potential local entrepreneurs. For this purpose, focus groups using graphical tools were conducted with villagers and interviews were conducted with shop owners.

Denmark: Preparing the Launch of an Innovative Showering Device in Ghana



As advisor, the Danish BoP Learning Lab supported a joint venture between an entrepreneur and an established manufacturer of shower and water saving products that already sells to developed markets. The partners develop a business in Ghana to market an innovative showering device for low-income households. The research objective was to learn about consumers’ willingness to change showering habits as well as to pay for the product’s value proposition, and to identify distribution channels. Therefore, the methodologies value chain mapping, focus groups, pilot sales and test installations were used.

India: Developing and Introducing a Housing Solution for the BoP in India



Methods used are in-the-field interviews, open-source design competition, and pilot construction.

India/USA: Expanding the value proposition of an existing soybean product



Methods used are living in the community homes, joint resource mapping, and solution co-creation in combination with market integration.

Method: “Bringing in the Consumer”

What is this method about?

- **Spend time with the community** to identify joint resources and to understand the context. This can be done with or without an existing product. Reality shows that companies often pre-select product functionalities and figure out how to introduce them in a BoP market.
- **Develop and test a product’s** functionalities or a service on the field with the community, for ex:
 - Product demonstrations
 - Test sales
- **Expanded value proposition:** In the testing field, the researchers have to stay open-minded and aim at creating the adequate, expanded value proposition meaning going beyond product design.

“Expanded value proposition requires trust and staying with a community”

Stuart Hart, ESW, USA

Challenges of implementing the method

- **Changing support team** or responsibilities within the project can halt the successful implementation of an initiative
- **Developing a good product yet the consumers still do not want it.** Why?
 - Outside restrictions that have not been identified before
 - People answer to questions based on their intentions (as often they do not know how much they would pay), but later they are not willing to pay that amount when the product is available
 - Irrelevant research questions
- **High transaction cost** when trying to convince customers one-to-one of a product
 - Co-creation is too focused on the technical product solution design
 - Existing differences between products with new functionalities and products with substitution functions must be considered in the research approach
 - Overly data-driven approaches that lead to loss of basic business methods and over-complication
 - Short-term involvement of stakeholders for product introduction leads to unsustainable solutions
 - Lack of sales skills



"As soon as you start a market research, you're already in a marketing phase"

Christina, Endeva, Germany

What works?

- **Co-create:** accompany shifting lifestyles and behaviors through community integration in the development of the value proposition

"You need a really compelling and broad value proposition for people to change behavior"

Willy

- **Widen the questions** in the value mapping process to understand what the surrounding issues of a product are and what the opportunity costs of switching to a new product are.
 - For example: instead of asking "what is the price of the house?", ask "what are all the barriers to getting a house?"
- **Use sales test instead of intention interviews** as a better predictor of willingness to pay

"The only way I found to get to the price point is to actually test sell the product"

Sara, DI, Denmark

- **Improve sales skills** of the lab
- **Develop intuition** in contexts where you lack knowledge: this can be achieved by designing the research in innovation cycles of iterations

3. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

This section on Product Development focuses on the importance to use various and complimentary methods to develop an adequate product in a BoP market. The key take-away in this section is that there is **no one-size-fits-all approach** when developing a product for a market where there is very little available information on behaviors, trends and preferences and that **learning from the whole research process** is crucial. The four case-studies for this group were:

China: Developing Mobile Phone Payment Solutions for Rural Farmers in China



The client was a rural farmer cooperative in China. Interviews were done with the farmers to scan for information on loans they could be interested in, mainly collecting quantitative data, with the result of developing an IT solution to bring financial services to these farmers.

Denmark: Sanitation Project in Uganda



Focus Groups as well as workshops were developed with local communities in order to gain useful information to develop "one stop sanitation shops". The research was organized with the Red Cross over one week and focused on issues such as safety, formats and comfort to be considered for the design and construction of toilets.

Finland: Housing Project in Sri Lanka



Focus group were conducted on apartments specifications to understand the needs and difficulties of people in order to develop a housing project for the victims of a tsunami. Interviews and focus group brought insights on the housing sector. Organizing an Idea and Innovation contest which brought forth a major willingness to share and a sense of empowerment. Moreover, when they were asked to create something, they really stuck to what could be possible.

Finland: Nutrition Mobile Application in India



Creating a mobile application in India to give advice and information on nutrition. Focus groups and prototype testing were organized to get insights on the desired features for the app.

Method: Developing a Product for a Specific BoP Context

What is this method about?

- **Effective and adapted market research to develop products** for the BoP where there is a lack of information on the market and on economic and consumption indicators.
- Observations
- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Testing and Prototyping



Challenges of implementing the method

- **Split up the different methods used and prepare them separately.** It is hard to find specific challenges and solutions for each method separately because they are a learning/methodological flow.
- **Inability to plan methods and apprehend the validity of information:** in higher-end markets, it is easier to expect what to find and to plan what type of questions or dynamics to use given the higher availability of social and economic insights on the market than at the BoP, where you have to adapt more to very context-specific and unknown realities.
- **Difficulty to develop a standardized approach:**
 - Methodologies for product development are not transferable from one context or case to another: what works in one case may not work in another (ex: picture cards and visual aids are understood in the context of a local culture)
 - when explaining to someone how to do a field work, you can't even say where to start and which steps to follow. The best is to start with one of the methods you think is better and then adapt and understand the best flow for the process
- **Communicating effectively with your studied sample population:**
 - In many cases, the interviewed consumers don't understand the questions, the flow of the methodology used by the researcher, the pictures...
 - Skepticism of the interviewed consumers who can assume you are related to a brand, to a government: risk of negative association that might compromise information collection.
- You can never predict when you are faced with **biases, cultural constraints and preconceived ideas.**
- Who does the market research? Students who are more open-minded and less biased agents and have more ease to reach the BoP vs. professionals and experts

who know how to create the right tools and how to implement them but can bring too much rigidity to the process.

What works?

- **Using a multi-method approach to obtain consensual findings:** Prototype Testing and Co-Creation to complement focus groups and interviews. These four tools should work as a process, in a very flexible way, each one adapting to the previous learnings.
- **Process as a whole is key:** when using different methods, you also obtain crucial information in between methods and the implementation process. In the process, new insights and useful information might appear as a consequence from prior methods, and the reactions may unleash new data and approaches.
 - Example of the innovation contest in Brazil where the results were not optimal but the process of doing it brought a lot of important information

"You need to learn from failing"

Jacob, Denmark

- **Making it more fun:** allows to obtain information with a specific objective but in an indirect and less biased way, for example:
 - Games, contests
 - Images, to show the product to people
 - Video production involving community. the same insights they give to characterize the movie, you use as insights for the product development
- **Joint learning:** developing the methodology with the community

"If you don't know which people to include in your focus group, you ask the community leader if you should inquire with only women or a mixed group and the reactions and answers on this information are already knowledge and data for the project"

Aline, Endeve, Germany

- **Focus on context and not just product:** context includes access, infrastructures, regulations, culture, influence of community leaders. Pairing the micro research with macro research that allows for the identification of parallel components through value chain understanding, stakeholder mapping, etc.
- **Using multidisciplinary teams** of researchers, designers, students, experts, consultants to optimize research tool development, data collection, methodology implementation and communication with the BoP.

4. MACRO-MARKET RESEARCH

The discussion group on Macro Market Research approached the topic of how to identify and understand a market opportunity or business strategies at the BoP through methods such as **exploratory research** and **field immersion**, identifying the best practices and main challenges, and based on the following four case-studies:

Sweden: Last Mile Distribution in Ghana



A number of companies and organizations conducted detailed research on distribution models to the BoP, with two primary objectives: 1) creating the foundation for a better BoP distribution model which contributes to poverty alleviation and sustainable development; 2) providing business with improved access to the BoP market. The research focused on the distribution models of five different BoP case studies in Ghana.

Brazil: Retail markets



Academic research was conducted with the objective of describing and analyzing the competition between large and local retail companies in two low-income regions of Sao Paulo, Brazil. The research tools included a survey of 209 consumers, a price research of 64 items, and in-depth interviews with store managers.

Colombia: Market Research on Small Retailers



Ethnographic research was conducted regarding the positioning of small retailers and how they survive in competition with big supply chains, as well as their capacity to build inclusive business within their local communities. The researchers moved into the suppliers' neighborhood for about 10 months, and collected information on a daily basis using audio and visual recording.

Spain: Technology transfers to Mexico within the agroindustry



ACC10 conducted applied research in rural Mexico with the objective of identifying how agricultural technology could improve rural agricultural development, and to explore the potential for adapted technology for small-scale rural developers. The research tools included visual tools, field immersion, workshops, process analyses, and technological award competitions.

Method: Exploratory Research

What is this method about?

- Exploratory global research
- Secondary preliminary research
- Surveys and quantitative data collection
- Identifying best practices and lessons for business via **comparative case-study analysis**
 - For example, in the case of Sweden: mapping different types of distribution strategies at the BoP through five case-studies in Ghana
 - In the case of Brazil: understanding and describing retail strategies targeting BoP consumers by comparing two cases of retailers in low-income communities of São Paulo



Challenges of implementing the method

- **Taking it to the next level:** Moving research findings from concrete data to abstract, higher-level findings that can be shared and replicated: this requires more time for research on the field

"The less time you spend on the field, the more research you have to do beforehand."

Fernando, CAD, Spain

- **Finding the flaws:** Moving from the simpler, more successful cases to the more challenging ones that may yield more beneficial research findings.
 - For example: respondents can have a tendency to highlight their success and showcase only simpler and less complicated processes.

What works?

- **Use of a qualitative analysis software:** for example, the analytical software Atlas TI to map different trends and translate them into more concrete conclusions that can be shared with a wider audience
- **Get concrete:** when a respondent tries to showcase only their best success, ask for examples.

Method: Immersion (Ethnography and Applied)

What is this method about?

- **Immersion in a BoP community** to collect information through direct observation and interaction including
 - Non-participatory observations
 - Focus groups
 - In-depth interviews
- **Two types of immersion: ethnography research and applied research**
 - **Ethnography research:** in the case of Colombia, living in the supplier's neighborhood for about 10 months and collecting information on a daily basis using audio and visual recording.
 - **Applied research:** in the case of Spain, processes of a value chain were observed and mapped with researchers spending three days with companies in each community, focusing on specific crops separately, and using focus groups to analyze every stage of the value chain.

"Small retailers have a natural, intuitive and unplanned CSR towards their local stakeholders. They naturally establish inclusive businesses within their local economies."

Juan, EAFIT, Colombia

Challenges of implementing the method

- **Personal challenges:** having to leave work and family to conduct the research
- **Initial mistrust from local communities** (which generally improved with time).
 - For example, in the Colombian case, on many occasions small retailers were initially convinced that the research project was funded by big suppliers.
- **Identifying the right local partners**
 - For example: some friction arose in Mexico in cases where participants were not local leaders.
- **Cultural differences**, particularly regarding the educational gaps between researchers and local participants.
- **Initial skepticism** on the part of participating companies in the immersion
 - For example: in the Spanish case, many ToP participants were initially pessimistic about the market, but ended up changing their minds when they saw, firsthand, the tremendous market potential within rural communities in Mexico.

"Local communities were surprisingly organized. They had a clear accounting system and were much easier to interact with than we had anticipated initially."

Fernando, CAD, Spain

What works?

- Applying immersion as a research methodology for new product design and/or product adaptation in poorly known markets
- Taking companies and clients to the field so they can participate and observe firsthand.

"They had to see it and live with them to see the true opportunity"

Fernando, CAD, Spain

- Briefing on the last day of immersion to come up with concrete solutions
 - For example, in Mexico: The study included a briefing on the last day, where experts had to come up with technology solutions within two-hour sessions.

APPENDIX



Brazil: Understanding Strategies of Large and Local Retailers Targeting BoP customers

Academic research was conducted with the objective of describing and analyzing the competition between large and local retail companies in two low-income regions of Sao Paulo. The research methods included a survey of 209 consumers, a price research of 64 items, and in-depth interviews with store managers.

Context of the market research: Brazil

Methods used:

- Survey questionnaire with BoP customers (both open and closed questions) to understand consumer preferences - the tool was tested in SMP beforehand to ensure the questionnaire was understandable to the targeted population.
- Price benchmarking to compare price competitiveness of the stores
- In-depth interviews with store manager to understand retail strategies and customer profiles.
- Secondary data collection to obtain information on store sales and performance

Result of the research: identification of three levels of competitors in a BoP context: the base retailer, the local retailer and the large retailer, each one with its own competitive advantages, strategies, value proposition and difficulties in a BoP market.

Highlights of the case:

- Validation of research instruments: importance of pilot testing as a market research practice?
- How to define a relevant BoP sample for this type of research? (especially in large countries with vastly different regions and consumers)
- Advantages/difficulties of survey research with a BoP population – how to communicate effectively and make it understandable
- Lessons on BoP consumer market analysis
- How do retailers (store managers) acquire market knowledge?



China: Developing Mobile Phone Payment Solutions for Rural Farmers in China

The client was a rural farmer cooperative in China. Interviews were done with the farmers to scan for information on loans they could be interested in, mainly collecting quantitative data, with the result of developing an IT solution to bring financial services to these farmers.

Context of the market research: China

Methods used for the research:

- Quantitative and qualitative data collection of farmer profiles to set up an e-file of farmers
- Interviews
- Working with different stakeholders: local mobile operator, government, associations

Result of the research: developing a mobile phone payment solution that could be used by the farmers.

Highlights of the case:

- How to build a network of partners and other stakeholders to obtain more grounded knowledge: governments, associations, etc.
- The importance of IT solutions at the BoP



Costa Rica: Integration of Waste Collectors in a Plastic Manufacturing Company's Value Chain

With Grupo Vanguardia, the Costa Rican lab's objective was to understand the dynamics of waste collectors in the city of San Pedro Sula in northern Honduras and the way in which they had become micro-entrepreneurs. Furthermore, we wanted to understand how a company can foster entrepreneurship among informal waste collectors now suppliers in its value-chain. And finally assessing how innovative business models can play a role in social engineering through alliances and co-creation in the BoP ecosystem.

Context of the research: Honduras (then conducted another similar study in Peru)

Methods used for the research:

- Case-study research
- Face-to-face interviews and use of guiding questions
- Secondary data
- Direct observation

Result of the research: writing a teaching case-study tested in MBA executive courses, Sustainability courses and international conferences to better frame the scope of the case and constantly improve it.

Highlights of the case:

- Operationalizing the results of a research: business model development, disseminating findings for strategy design for companies, etc.
- Importance of context: institutional framework, country environment, local culture, etc.
- Adapting, solidifying and enriching the results of a research with new and additional insights (other cases i.e. in Peru, teaching context, conferences)
- How much attention should you give to study regulations before? How to identify the relevant stakeholders and impact factors?
- How to involve a larger contribution base as in the example with student contributions?
- How to cope with other social problems (e.g. criminality) interfering in social business?

Denmark: Creating the Value Proposition for a Hygiene Product for Low-Income Households in Ghana



As advisor, the Danish BoP Learning Lab supported a joint venture between an entrepreneur and an established manufacturer of shower and water saving products that already sells to developed markets. The partners develop a business in Ghana to market an innovative showering device for low-income households. The research objective was to learn about consumers' willingness to change showering habits as well as to pay for the product's value proposition, and to identify distribution channels. Therefore, the methodologies value chain mapping, focus groups, pilot sales and test installations were used.

Context of the market research: Ghana

Methods used in the research:

- Value-chain mapping for existing hygiene products in the market
- Using focus groups interviews to understand household spending and consumer preferences
- Observations on the field
- Real-time market data collection: pilot sales setup, test installations of product, consumer feedback on what they think of the product...

Result: developing a value proposition for a showering and water-saving device for low-income households in Ghana.

Highlights of the case:

- Lessons and best practices from focus group interviewing method: how to avoid bias?
- Use of visual material (picture cards): useful to obtain information but additional methods are necessary, especially sales tests.
- Understanding the "willingness to pay" dimension of a BoP population for a product targeting the BoP
- Obtaining insights from live market tests that interviews/observations would not yield (for ex: the consumers gets to test the product and gives feedback): importance of these tests to design an effective business model/strategy and other practices
- Are trial methods applicable to any industry and is the best way to capture relevant information?



Germany: Understanding the Demand for Energy Services in Rural Madagascar

On behalf of a German social investor, Endeva conducted research with end consumers in rural villages of Madagascar. The research aimed to understand current uses, sources and spendings on energy, as well as potential uses of clean energy, willingness to spend and potential local entrepreneurs. For this purpose, focus groups using graphical tools were conducted with villagers and interviews were conducted with shop owners.

Context of the research: Madagascar

Methods used for the research:

- Meeting with potential partners and competitors
- Focus group interviews
- Immersion and observation
- Interviews with shop owners and potential entrepreneurs

Result of the research: the solar-kiosk social business HERI was founded in Madagascar as a result of this research

Highlights of the case:

- Integration of the researcher in the context: immersion, understanding local culture, having local points of contact, etc.
- Lessons learnt and best practices from focus group interviewing method
- Use of visual material (charts)
- Understanding the “willingness to pay” dimension of a BoP population for a product targeting the BoP
- How to get consumer information for products that they do not know at all?
- What is the influence of local leaders? How to use them in a non-risky way because they can support but also totally destroy the possible success?
- How to access the community? What is the value of people knowing local traditions? Can this create a bias?



Japan: Developing an IT Tool to Share and Disseminate Knowledge among Rural Farmers

Consulting mission for the development of a product allowing to bridge the information gap in the agricultural sector through the use of ICT tool (tablet) by farmers for educational content.

Context of the research: India

Methods used for the research:

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Market testing: skills workshop, trial, observation, live feedback

Results of the research: developing educational content for farmers via movies broadcasted on computer tablets

Highlights of the case:

- The ease of farmers to use computer tablets because they already all had mobile phones: relevance of IT for BoP consumers.
- Importance of institutional support from government and role of government in BoP
- Understanding the “willingness to pay” dimension of a BoP population for a product targeting the BoP
- Lessons, challenges and obstacles for product penetration in a BoP segment
- Marketing and business strategies to grow a first role model
- How to avoid dependency of MNC or other actor funding? How to decrease the risk?



Spain: Technology Transfers to Mexico within the Agroindustry

ACC10 conducted applied research in rural Mexico with the objective of identifying how agricultural technology could improve rural agricultural development, and to explore the potential for adapted technology for small-scale rural developers. The research tools included visual tools, field immersion, workshops, process analyses, and technological award competitions.

Context of the research: Mexico and Catalunya

Methods used for the research:

- Survey analysis
- Stakeholder mappings
- In-depth interviews
- 2-week rural immersion with 15 technological centers from agro-industrial clusters from Catalunya – analyzed seven opportunities in groups of two.

Result of the research: from the seven opportunities presented and analyzed, four are currently being implemented.

Points for discussion

- Immersion is key for companies to get a firsthand understanding of the market opportunities at the BoP and to lift skepticism.
- Advantages of learning for both sides? Importance of immersion field trips for real understanding
- How to cope with two groups in one workshop that have very different experience on those kinds of methodologies?
- What was the experience to engage the authorities?



Sweden: Describing Distribution Strategies at the BoP through Compared Case-Studies of Last-Mile Distribution in Ghana

A number of companies and organizations conducted detailed research on distribution models to the BoP, with two primary objectives: 1) creating the foundation for a better BoP distribution model which contributes to poverty alleviation and sustainable development; 2) providing business with improved access to the BoP market. The research focused on the distribution models of five different BoP case studies in Ghana.

Context of the research: Ghana

Methods used for the research:

- Mix of secondary research and case-study field research
- Use of the 4A framework
- Comparative case-study analysis: identification of common challenges (and options and alternatives to address them), trends and learnings

Result of the research: a BoP distribution strategy framework was proposed and the case studies were published in a book

Highlights of the case:

- The importance of secondary research before going to the field
- The advantages and inconvenients of multi-case study comparisons for BoP knowledge (context specificities vs. generalization)
- How to form abstract findings without losing the details to understand the examples?
- What were the obstacles to accessing the field? How did they get around them?
- After the research: best channels to make the knowledge accessible (publication, material, teaching, etc.)