



Addressing gender equality in agricultural value chains: Sharing work in progress

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Colophon

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1. Introduction

Development organisations that intervene in value chains are increasingly looking for pro poor and gender equal outcomes, nevertheless gender is not always mainstreamed in analysis, design and impact assessment in value chain development.

As members of Agri-ProFocus (APF), working in the field of value chain and rural development this has been reason to start a learning trajectory on gender in value chains. This APF trajectory started in the beginning of 2008. The overarching goal for the trajectory was defined as: *Having value chains work for women!* A core group from KIT, HIVOS, Cordaid, ICCO, Oxfam Novib coordinates activities supported by the APF team.

One of the first insights was that addressing gender in value chain thinking requires the combination of different knowledge fields: 'gender and women empowerment' with 'pro poor value chain development'. Therefore gender experts have been explicitly invited to participate in this trajectory. In 2009 this resulted in a working paper of the APF members on gender in Value chains, Emerging Lessons and Questions (Laven et al, 2009).¹ In this paper we documented the main initiatives that existed in the gender in value chains trajectory (a.o. an analysis of seven cases, an emerging framework, short literature review, lessons and emerging questions). Literature is being steadily collected and shared through websites and online networks² which centralize APF discussions and tools.

In 2010, the members of the APF group decided to document and elaborate on the learning to date through a writeshop process. This process allowed reflection and further development of the issues at stake with support and contributions from value chain and gender experts as well as practitioners. In preparation of the writeshop a pre-meeting was organized (June 2010)³ where experts were invited to work with the APF core group and gender colleagues for each organization. The objective of the pre-meeting was twofold. First, to elaborate arguments for bringing together the fields of gender and women empowerment and chain empowerment. Second, to discuss effective strategies for different practitioners to improve gender equity and inclusion in value chains. Later in the year (November) the writeshop was organised in Kenya by KIT and the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) and was funded by ICCO,

1 http://api.ning.com/files/gMYQID5yguknnP-fM008W-oxX0KoT4d9l29s0b3pW*TFsrXJAeddibbJgbyeikFOpwJNprQoVePvnLul78M1jGpqd79yVMJL/GenderinValuechainsWorkingPaper.doc

2 http://delicious.com/tag/apf_gender and <http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com/>

3 Participants from APF network: Angelica Senders (ICCO), Andre Vording (ICCO), Catherine van der Wees (HIVOS), Irene Dubel (HIVOS), Anna Laven (KIT), Rhiannon Pyburn (KIT), Noortje Verhart (KIT), Rolf van de Maas (Oxfam Novib), Jennie van der Mheen (WUR), Gerdien Seegers (Cordaid), Resi Jansen (Cordaid), Carolien Kernkamp (Wo=Men), Roel Snelder (Agri-ProFocus).

External experts: Christina Manfre (ACDI/VOCA), Linda Mayoux (independent), Ambra Galina (IFAD), Cathy Farnworth (IFAD), Karin Astrid Siegmann (ISS).

Oxfam Novib, Hivos, Cordaid, and APF. Besides 25 caseholders coming from all over the world⁴ also APF members participated, resource persons from KIT, a number of editors and artists⁵. During 10 days in total 25 cases from Africa, Latin America and Asia have been documented and these cases will form the heart of a publication on strategies for addressing gender in value chain analysis and development. This book is expected to be published during the summer of 2011 and will be part of the KIT value chain series. In anticipation of this book, this paper discusses the framework that emerged during the writeshop and from the APF learning trajectory.

For KIT, gender and value chains have become an important theme. During the last few years, internal funds have been allocated to bring value chain and gender experts together. This has resulted in several outputs. For example a training curriculum has been developed, including a resource pack for trainers on gender and value chains⁶. KIT also coordinates a gender and certification trajectory in which APF members participate (Oxfam Novib, Hivos, Solidaridad). This has resulted so far in a working paper and two videos.⁷

The emerging framework, being discussed in this paper, builds upon earlier work developed within APF learning trajectory and within KIT. It looks at mainstreaming gender in the existing chain empowerment framework, developed by KIT (KIT et al 2006). The aim of the gender and value chain framework is twofold. First, it looks at how value chain analysis can be used as an instrument to understand gender inequalities and to identify ways to overcome them. Second, integrating gender into a value chain framework helps to understand how gender inequality hinders (equal) upgrading strategies and to identify ways of how these barriers can be removed.

4 http://api.ning.com/files/MbLh9xvhhYxQ28HcxDimErmDg-DI4HiNCekTjKWyhgCMoPkP5yo0ODS6EGnahYnNyyv-IRDpkn2w6XWNKUdusA*Io9W7IJsC6/101111ParticipantsAPFgenderwriteshop.xls

5 http://api.ning.com/files/NLuXHPbA*Ma8WToLx61E1HamaUtkZPbNOhx*KNg4yyfQFmS1DdBa25a6ev-N9IZ1AExLSQM2l-5-W1ITVHIF5PNRhDiiPt*/101115StaffAPFGVCwriteshop.xls

6 Anna Laven and Noortje Verhart (2009) Pro poor business: gender in value chains. A resource pack for development practitioners. The first steps towards a training package on gender and value chains KIT

7 Rhiannon Pyburn and Noortje Verhart (2011) Towards Gender Equity in Certified Coffee Chains: Key concepts, documented cases and emerging strategies KIT

Two videos have been developed that show the results of two workshops on gender and certification that were organised in Costa Rica and in Nairobi in 2009 and 2010 respectively

2. Gender and value chains

2.1 Why gender and value chains?

The economic liberalization policies that accompany global trade have heavily impacted on employment opportunities, quality of employment and standards of living while accentuating inequality and exacerbating power imbalances. Inequality appears to have been on the rise worldwide at both national and international levels for example more than 80 per cent of the world's population lives in countries where income differentials are widening (United Nations, 2010).⁸ It is known that women's work often takes place in least valued parts of a value chain e.g. as home-based workers or informal workers more generally. Making profit by exploiting women is a real risk (e.g. Seguino, 2000). Women tend to be underpaid and their (informal) jobs are less secure. As informal workers, women are rarely effectively reached by private forms of labour governance, such as codes of conduct (Barrientos et al, 2003). In agricultural settings women are often not visible while they do a large part of the farm-activities. Moreover, it is well-documented that women-owned rural businesses tend to face many more constraints and receive far fewer services and support than those owned by men (Mayoux, 2010).

Inequality is not only about inequality in incomes but also about inequality in opportunity. Inequality of opportunity hinders people's ability to contribute to prosperity and economic growth and undermines countries' ability to reduce poverty (World Bank, 2006). Gender inequality is integral to other forms of social inequality and therefore poses particular constraints to economic growth: opening up opportunities for women represents a significant force for change.

2.2 Linking gender, business and poverty

During the 1990s, the human development agenda of the UN placed the human person as the central subject and beneficiary of development. Informed by the work of Amartya Sen (Sen 1999 in UNDP 2000) the human development approach defined the basic purpose of development as expanding the choices people have to lead lives they have reason to value. This paradigm emphasizes that expanding capabilities will allow a person to use opportunities, which requires that benefits from economic growth are distributed equitably. From this perspective, interventions are geared towards equal opportunities, equal access and equal outcomes as a result.

From an economic perspective, unequal growth is "inefficient". This perspective is especially used by international economic institutions, such as the World Bank. From this perspective it is argued that gender inequality has high economic costs and leads to

⁸ <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/docs/2010/chapter1.pdf>

wasted human resources and missed opportunities for innovation (e.g. World Bank 2005). As a result, interventions focus on growth, while at the same ensuring participation of both men and women with the aim to make the economy more efficient but also inclusive at the same time.

In practice, these perspectives are not being brought together. Interventions in value chains or the development of new value chains are not always pro poor and based on economic growth instead of redistribution. On top of that they are often gender blind. Development organizations are not always aware of existing inequalities, the causes of and how to address these. Time and conditions do not always allow for a gender analysis before an intervention is developed and implemented.

One of the causes is a lack of available expertise and existing resistance among people in different organisations. Therefore bringing in gender in value chain thinking not only requires a combination of expertise and knowledge, but also convincing arguments for different target groups. Rural entrepreneurs might be more interested in profit, while local NGOs might be willing to support change to benefit the wider community. For some equality goals/non-discrimination are convincing while others will be more influenced by profit arguments and trade relations. It can also be necessary to convince one's direct colleagues to mainstream gender in his or her daily activities. Gender is still too often perceived as an 'add on', or as an imposed issue that they have to deal with, instead of helping to improve their work.

In this paper we focus less on the instrumental role of these arguments. For this paper it is relevant to keep in mind that the emerging framework should eventually not only support strategies by development organisations, but also by business, service providers in agricultural value chains, producer organisations, finance organisations etc. For development organizations who aim to work on pro-poor economic development, addressing gender inequality is an entry point to achieve that objective. However, there are different perspectives and related arguments, which lead to different strategies and interventions, to contribute to gender equality.

3. Emerging framework on gender and value chains

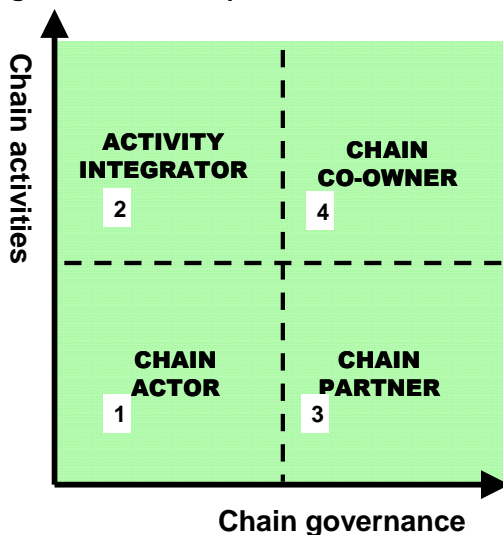
3.1 Starting point: The chain empowerment framework

The chain empowerment framework is developed from the notion that empowerment of small farmers is vital for sustainability. Chain empowerment is about increasing the capacities of farmers to add value to the activities they are involved in to become involved in chain management issues. This is summarized in two basic questions:

1. Who does what in the chain?
2. Who determines how things are done? (KIT et al., 2006).

Farmers may be concerned only with production: they prepare the land, plant seeds, apply fertilizer, control pests and weeds, and harvest the crop. But they may also be involved in activities higher up in a chain, including sorting and grading, processing or trading their produce. If farmers are involved in a wide range of activities in addition to production, this contributes to their empowerment. However, chain empowerment requires that these producers gain economic power by becoming involved in managing the chain (Figure 1). Farmers can participate in various aspects of management, such as controlling the terms of payment, defining grades and standards, or managing innovation. Important questions include how to obtain this power and, more generally, what kind of strategies contribute to empowerment.

Figure 1 Chain empowerment matrix



In this matrix there are four empowerment strategies⁹:

1. *Upgrading as a chain actor* – the farmers become crop specialists with a clear market orientation;
2. *Adding value through vertical integration* – the farmers move into joint processing and marketing in order to add value;
3. *Developing chain partnerships* – the farmers build long-term alliances with buyers, centred on shared interests and mutual growth;
4. *Developing ownership over the chain* – the farmers try to build direct linkages with consumers.

⁹ This matrix is a tool for strategic thinking about chain development. The best position of a farmer is not necessarily in the upper-right quadrant, but depends on the specific situation, and may change over time.

Although the chain empowerment matrix is a powerful tool to understand the different positions farmers take within a chain and how these can be improved, the matrix does not allow us to understand why farmers are positioned in a particular quadrant and what the constraints are to move out of this position. Because the matrix does not provide an explanation of constraints, it is unable to differentiate between the constraints faced by women as compared to men, because of their social position. Neither does it provide information on outcomes of the strategies and whether these outcomes are different for women and men and different types of farmers. Because of that, it doesn't provide us enough insights how interventions can be designed to generate gender equal outcomes and are pro poor. Because of these shortcomings, a new framework has emerged based on the existing one. This framework serves two additional goals:

1. Help to design, implement, monitor and evaluate value chain interventions in such a way that they contribute to gender equality in a given context
2. Understand how gender equality contributes to pro-poor and economically efficient value chain development

3.2 Structure and agency

In order to design upgrading strategies which can lead to gender equal outcomes (men and women benefit equally from the upgrade), additional dimensions are needed in this framework to fully understand the processes that shape their positioning, the constraints they face, and to design interventions that address these and lead to upgrading (change). The proposed additional dimensions for the framework come from the social sciences and are also used in the political economy and gender literature. These additional dimensions look at the role of institutions and how these shape human interaction (for example in the value chain) and at the same time how individual behaviour shape and are shaped by these institutions (decisions people make and why). It's about the impact of values and ideas (informal institutions) on behaviour which are specific to a certain context, time and sometimes specific value chain.

Gender relations can be looked at in that perspective. Gender relations are shaped by individual behaviour as well as social institutions, for example norms and values about what role men and women should fulfil in production. In order to integrate gender relations in value chain development we integrate two new dimensions: **structure** and **agency**.

Agency is the capacity of individual humans to act independently and to make their own free choices. **Structures** are factors such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, custom etc. which limit or influence the opportunities that individuals have.

These two concepts are interrelated. Focusing only on agency assumes, for example, that if business and financial services are provided a woman can freely choose to use these services, without facing any constraints posed by her family, community, or her

class/ caste/ or other status to market her products for example. Structure is also about formal institutions such as laws and regulation. Focusing on structure only assumes for example that laws are always implemented and that equal opportunities will always lead to equal outcomes.

By looking at the interaction between structures and agency, the dimensions help to understand the impact of structures (formal and informal institutions) on individual behaviour which are specific to a certain context, time and sometimes specific value chain, and the other way around. So basically in this form of analysis **human agency** shapes and is in turn shaped by formal and informal rules and institutions which accounts for a certain positioning in the value chain and the outcomes of value chain interventions.

3.3 Upgrading strategies from a gender lens

An analysis focusing on institutions and agency helps to understand the positioning of a rural entrepreneur in a value chain and the constraints to upgrade (or to change that position). As a result, it helps to design interventions that address these potential constraints to upgrade. A gender lens is essential in that kind of analysis. One way to engender the chain empowerment framework, is therefore to look both at structural and individual constraints and opportunities for men and women to upgrade in a value chain. Based on that, interventions can be designed that aim to achieve gender equal outcomes in upgrade strategies.

Upgrading as chain actor

For example the first chain empowerment strategy, focuses on upgrading as a chain actor. In this situation the female chain actor is engaged in a range of activities, but these are often not visible or activities are not valued, compared to the activities of her male counterpart (often also husband). Women may therefore be “crop specialists”, but are not recognised as such.

For most of the cases documented in the writeshop book, upgrading as chain actor is one way of strengthening a rural entrepreneur’s position in the chain. In these cases part of the interventions aim at increasing and securing the returns for female farmers by improving volumes and/or quality that they produce. The case of sheabutter in Guinea, represented by Ward Tanghe from the Belgian NGO Trias, is an interesting example. In Guinea women are traditionally involved in the collection and small-scale processing of sheanut. Women are able to do this because they don’t need land to access nuts. They make butter which they sell at rural markets to earn some money. The income they derive from this activity is little but essential to make ends meet. This activity is not without risks and the negotiation position of women involved in this type of informal activities is often low. This explains also the choice of development

organizations to choose interventions that will strengthen the position for women related to an activity they already do.

To make an intervention successful, no shortcuts can be taken. To enable women to gain a higher and secure income, it is not enough to only improve their technical skills, but to also invest in improving individual skills, such as planning and literacy. On top of that, women had been assisted to organise themselves in unions. As a result their activities have become more visible in the shea value chain.

Upgrading as activity integrator

The second strategy focuses on adding value through taking control over more activities in the chain. This upgrading strategy requires skills and entails costs. For women, a possible hindrance to upgrade is that they don't control the additional income that they earn. On top of that it may increase a woman's workload considerably with implications for her wellbeing and may not help her to negotiate for better terms in the household.

In the upcoming book, a number of cases aim at increasing involvement in value chain activities higher up in the chain. Although we lack evidence on how the distribution of income within households takes place, it becomes clear that ownership for women is key. Again in the shea butter case, the fact that women became owner of the processing machines enabled them to produce higher volumes and better quality of sheabutter, and to access favourable markets.

Upgrading as chain partner

The third strategy looks at strategies for farmers to become a chain partner. However, here we also see similar gendered constraints. Women can become a member of a producer organisation, or they can even become board members of these organisations, but that does not in itself mean that they are able to influence decision making processes. On top of providing women with a position, women need for example individual skills (i.e. how to negotiate) and awareness of what they can do.

A number of cases in the writeshop illustrate the constraints women face and ways of dealing with them. For example in the case of the Allan Blackia chain in Tanzania, represented by Harold Lema from the NGO Faida MaLi, existing gender policies and targets ensured that women were represented in training, producer organisations and price negotiations. This made them chain partners in a newly developed value chain.

Traditionally AB nuts are a women's crop. The nuts grow on trees in collective lands and women pick, process and sell them in the local market. The demand from Unilever, increased the price of the nuts and as a result the interest of men to be involved in growing them. Women did not have that opportunity because they don't own land. In this example Faida MaLi established the relationships between Unilever and the farmers,

who initially were mainly women. They ensured that women were also part of the contractual negotiations and arrangements when the nut became a commercial crop. They did this through quota for female representation in their training programs and in producer groups. As a result, women did not lose their source of income from the AB nut, but instead were able to participate in a newly developed commercial value chain as one of the chain partners.

Upgrading as co-owner

The fourth strategy is actually a combination of the second and third strategy. As co-owner women control a number of activities in the chain and participate in chain management issues. The case “café feminino”, presented by Gay Smith from OPTCO, is an interesting example where the intervention resulted in Peruvian female coffee producers becoming co-owner of the coffee chain. Interventions resulted in higher quality production and female representation at all levels of the value chain. This enabled women to establish sustainable relationships in the chain, which made them co-owners and decision makers. It has resulted in a successful female coffee brand in the world market.

The intervention initially focused on coffee farming and for coffee producers to become so called “crop specialists”. Later on training was also focusing on finance, leadership and organizational skills. The situational analysis showed that in Peru coffee producers face a number of constraints (e.g. lack of organization, land ownership). Women involved in coffee production face additional constraints, such as illiteracy, double responsibilities and some face domestic abuse.

The NGO that supported the producers, proposed to other actors in the chain to develop a separate women’s coffee label and to market this separately. As a result, the cooperative set up a small export company, to manage the processing of the coffee. A US based coffee importer was interested to buy the coffee which was produced, processed and sold only by women. This made it easier for female coffee producers to build sustainable relationships in the chain. As a result women are now able to co-decide on how their coffee is being produced, processed and sold.

3.4 Steps for gender mainstreaming in value chain development

In the emerging framework a distinction is made between interventions, upgrading strategies and upgrading outcomes. The upgrading strategies have been identified in the chain empowerment framework and highlight different ways to improve an entrepreneur’ position in the value chain. However, relations in the chain, the influence of contextual factors and current constraints and risks to upgrade are not part of the framework. To enable actors in the value chain to define interventions that will lead to gender equal outcomes, additional dimensions have been added to the framework, so that (in)equal chain relations, context and current risks, are being addressed.

In other words when we talk about chain empowerment strategies with the aim to achieve gender equal outcomes, it is important to first look at current constraints and opportunities at individual and institutional levels, which can be addressed in the intervention. It is also important to look at the kind of change needed, to realize gender equal upgrading outcomes. This means that gender should be “mainstreamed” throughout the process to design, implement and monitor upgrading strategies in the value chain. In order to choose relevant strategies to achieve gender equal and pro poor outcomes in a particular context, the framework can be applied through the following steps:

1. Situational analysis
 - What is the current position of small rural entrepreneurs in the chain?
 - What are the (gendered) constraints for ensuring a better position in the chain?
 - Are these (gendered) constraints of a structural or agency nature?
2. Strategy selection and intervention design in a value chain
 - Based on the analysis, what upgrading strategy is being selected?
 - What kinds of interventions are needed to ensure that the outcomes of the upgrading strategy are gender equal?
 - What is needed to address structural and individual constraints to contribute to gender equal outcomes?
3. Monitoring of outcomes
 - How did men and women benefit from the strategy?
 - What kinds of adjustments are needed to improve the intervention to contribute to gender equal upgrading outcomes?

This means that before interventions are being designed, a situational analysis can help to gain insights in current gender relations and positioning of men and women in the value chain, and to define what is needed to upgrade. A more detailed overview of relevant questions can be looked at in the resource pack that was developed by KIT in 2009¹⁰. This resource pack also contains questions at other stages in the value chain selection, analysis and development process.

¹⁰ Resource pack – upon request

4. Conclusions

4.1 Gender mainstreaming in value chains

Looking at the chain empowerment framework through a gender lens, provides a good basis to design interventions that contribute to gender equal upgrading outcomes. A way to engender the framework is to look both at structural and individual constraints and opportunities for men and women to upgrade in a value chain. This paper gives a first insight in what the framework is, how it's emerging and how it can be used to design programs that deal with gender inequalities in the chain.

The framework that is emerging, aims to help value chain actors to develop value chains that contribute to gender equality in production and trade relations. It aims to help organisations to design strategies where both men and women can benefit from and which at the same time make (global) value chains more efficient.

4.2 Remaining challenges of gender mainstreaming in value chains

In order to mainstream gender, a thorough analysis is needed of the current situation and existing gender relations. An analysis of gender relations is the starting point to further mainstream gender in value chain analysis and development. However, in reality interventions are still gender blind and if gender is recognised to be important to look at, it's often done when interventions have already been designed.

As a result, instead of addressing the underlying structures that shape the gender relations in and outside of the value chain, interventions often look at "quick wins". Quick wins are for example additional training for women, credit programs that focus on women and an emphasis on numbers (for example male and female participation in training). Despite of the fact that these "quick wins" have in some cases lead to interventions that addressed the root causes of inequalities, it may give the wrong signal of how gender relations shape and are being shaped by institutions and how interventions can change these.

One of the main features of a value chain approach is the focus on sustainable relationships within (global) value chains. Long term relationships are an essential ingredient to built efficient value chains. However, among the different value chain actors, power difference exist based on social and economic inequalities. Gender is integral to these forms of social inequality. These inequalities are for example rooted in north south differences, differences between business organisations versus development organisations but also individuals versus groups. This means that sustainable relationships, to develop efficient and prop poor value chains, can only be

achieved when these power differences are being recognised, analysed and appropriately addressed¹¹.

A value chain comprises of several actors with different interests in the product which is being developed in the chain. Actors therefore become “stakeholders”. Each actor looks at their role from a different perspective. Business looks at it through a profit lens or their CSR strategy, governments focus on redistributive mechanisms and small scale producers want to sustain their basic livelihood. Different actors are able to exercise their power in different ways. A thorough understanding of social power relations in a value chain, with the aim to built pro poor and gender equal value chains, is essential, but not easy to realise in practice.

4.3 Opportunities

The case studies that have been documented, show several value chain interventions that contribute to different upgrading strategies. They provide us with key insights in how specific interventions can contribute to gender equal outcomes, but also what the remaining challenges are. This creates lots of opportunities and entry points for development organizations to improve their work in practice.

Also, many interventions that have been documented for the gender and value chains book, describe the role of public private partnerships. These partnerships have proven to play an essential role in market access and at the same time skills training for women, who would otherwise be marginalized in the value chain development process.

This paper and the forthcoming book on gender and value chains, enables both value chain experts and gender experts to further discuss and to come to terms with different paradigms, related language and questions. It’s the right questions and each of our own commitment to gender, that will eventually lead to improvements in the position of women, who increasingly play a role to provide for our daily needs all over the world.

¹¹ See also resource pack on gender and value chains

Epilogue

The writeshop book promises to be an exciting book, documenting not only 25 cases, testimonials and tools, but also analysing the kind of strategies that can be useful for practitioners to address gender inequality in value chain development. The book aims at supporting practitioners in designing interventions that contribute to gender equal upgrading outcomes and understand the remaining challenges. What contributes to the excitement is that it is a serious attempt to bring the fields of 'gender and women empowerment' and 'chain empowerment' together, contributing to the knowledge field of pro-poor development.

Because it remains to be quite a challenge to convince all those different stakeholders involved in value chain development on the importance of mainstreaming gender, the book will devote one of the chapters to convincing arguments that have proven to be useful to keep people from different disciplines, representing a wide range of organisations, interested in the issue.¹²

All organizations involved are committed to further develop knowledge in the field of gender and value chains. Besides the book, also the work on gender and certification, the development of training materials and tools, will continue.

¹² In this chapter we build upon the arguments presented and discussed in the pre-meeting and a literature review.

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