



Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

ACDI/VOCA's approach to data management

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Setting the Stage

- ACDI/VOCA and what we do
- Transitioning our data management to ActivityInfo
- Our approach to M&E for accountability and learning
 - Project level
 - Corporate level
 - Utilizing data for adaptive management and corporate learning
- Summary, Lessons and recommendations

ACDI/VOCA and what we do



Our mission is to achieve better lives for people and communities by increasing economic prosperity and social inclusion.

- A nonprofit international development organization based in Washington, D.C and founded in 1963
- It has worked in 146 countries, currently in 20 countries
- Focus on delivering technical and management assistance in agribusiness, financial services, enterprise development, community development and food security in order to

Promote broad-based economic growth and vibrant civil society

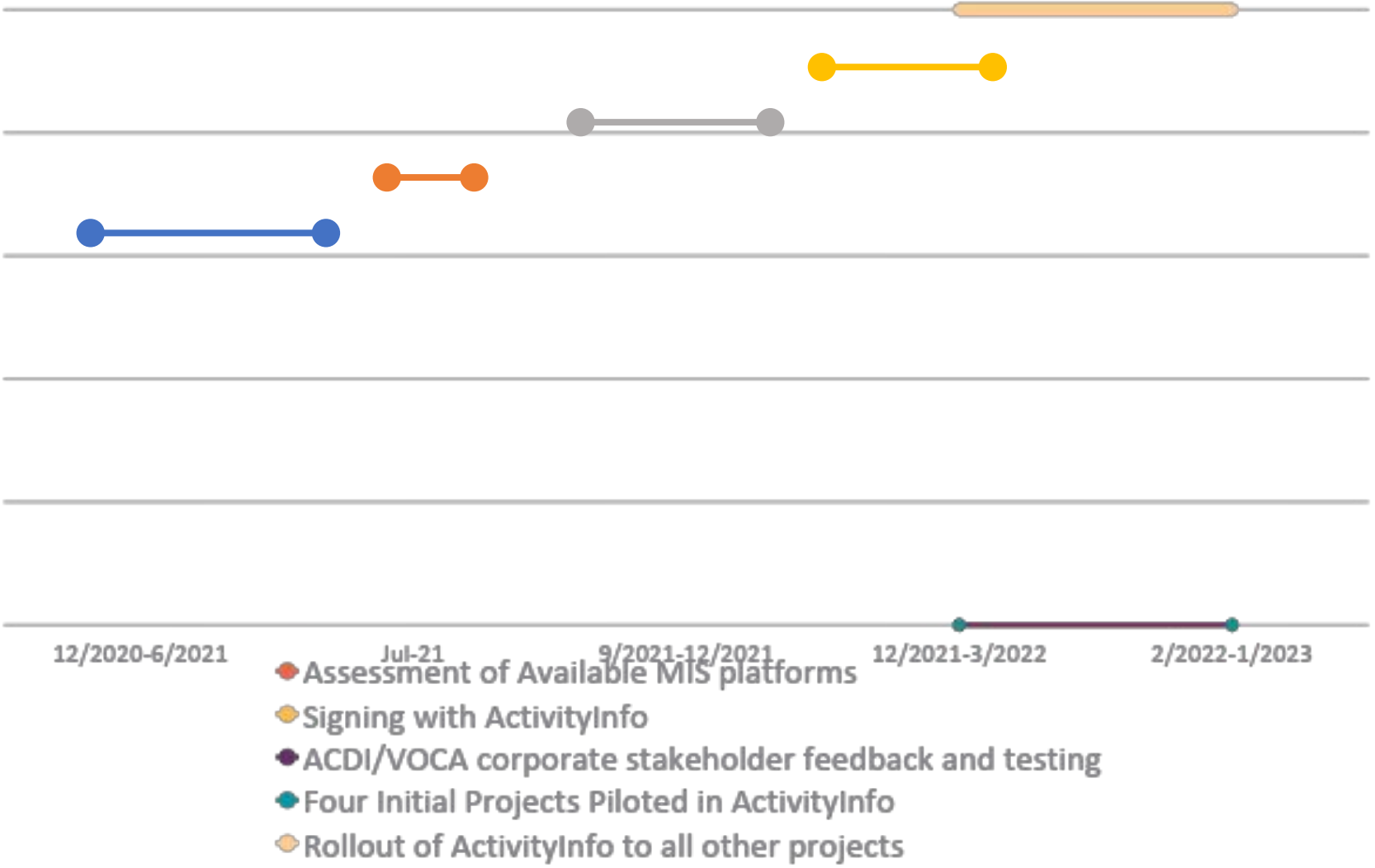
ACDI/VOCA's Approach to M&E

- Our MEL approach is to ensure accountability and learning
 - MEL must ensure that we accountable to our clients, partners, and donors
 - Our data is a management tool for evidence-based decisions
 - Data must have the highest quality and secure
 - Use our data to assess the effectiveness of project implementation approaches and the critical success and/or failure factors.
 - We analyze our data to learn about the quality of each projects' performance, and
 - Analyze data across projects to identify concepts that work or don't work well in certain contexts or countries to
 - Adaptive management,
 - Enable evidence-based project design and implementation.

GLOBAL MIS Support



Timeline



- Assessment of Available MIS platforms
- Signing with ActivityInfo
- ACDI/VOCA corporate stakeholder feedback and testing
- Four Initial Projects Piloted in ActivityInfo
- Rollout of ActivityInfo to all other projects

STEPS: Designing the Database

Donor-Approved List of Project Indicators

Stakeholder Engagement – Project MERL and MIS Teams

- Brainstorming Session – Focus on Indicators
- Common understanding of each indicator
- Disaggregates
- Frequency of data collection and reporting

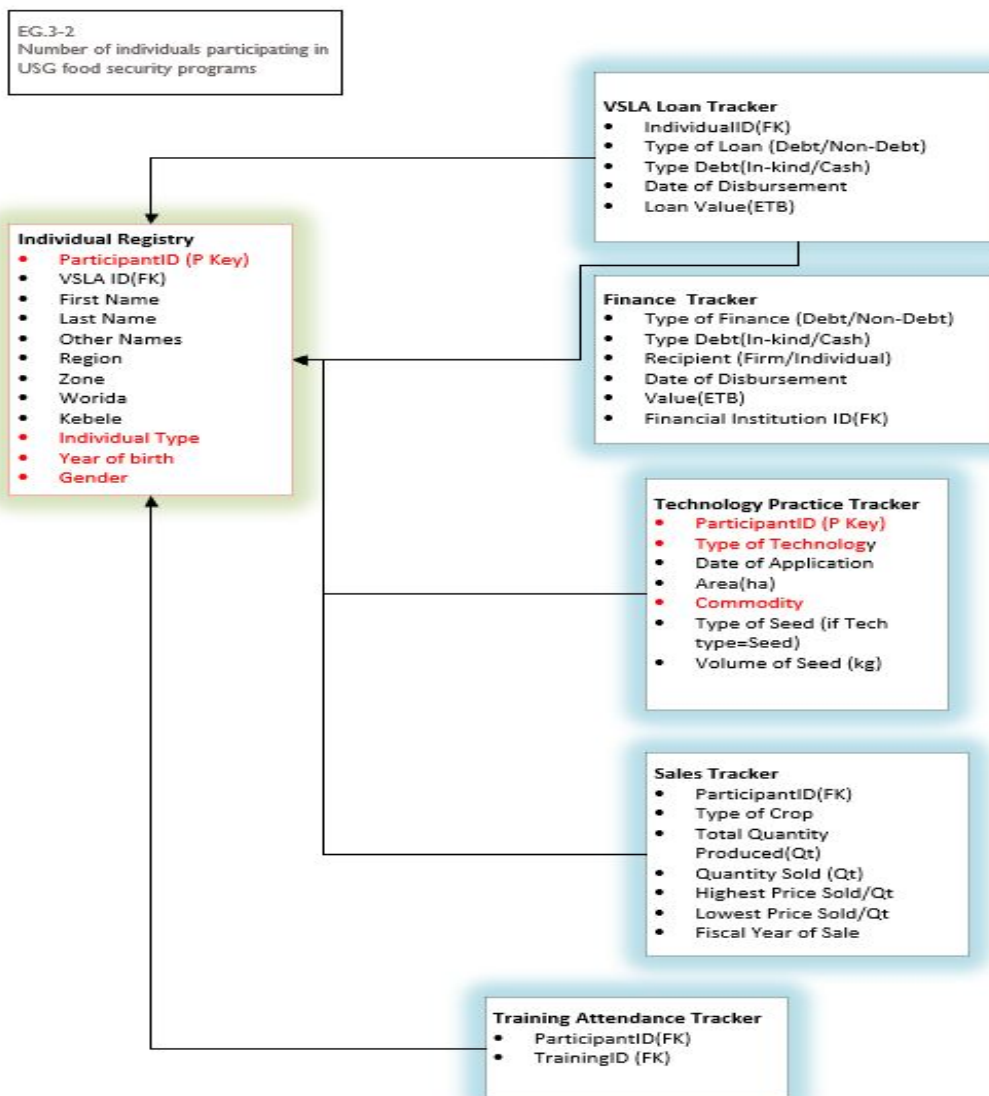
Schema Design (in visio)– Tables and Relationships for each Indicator

Build tables in ActivityInfo based on the schema

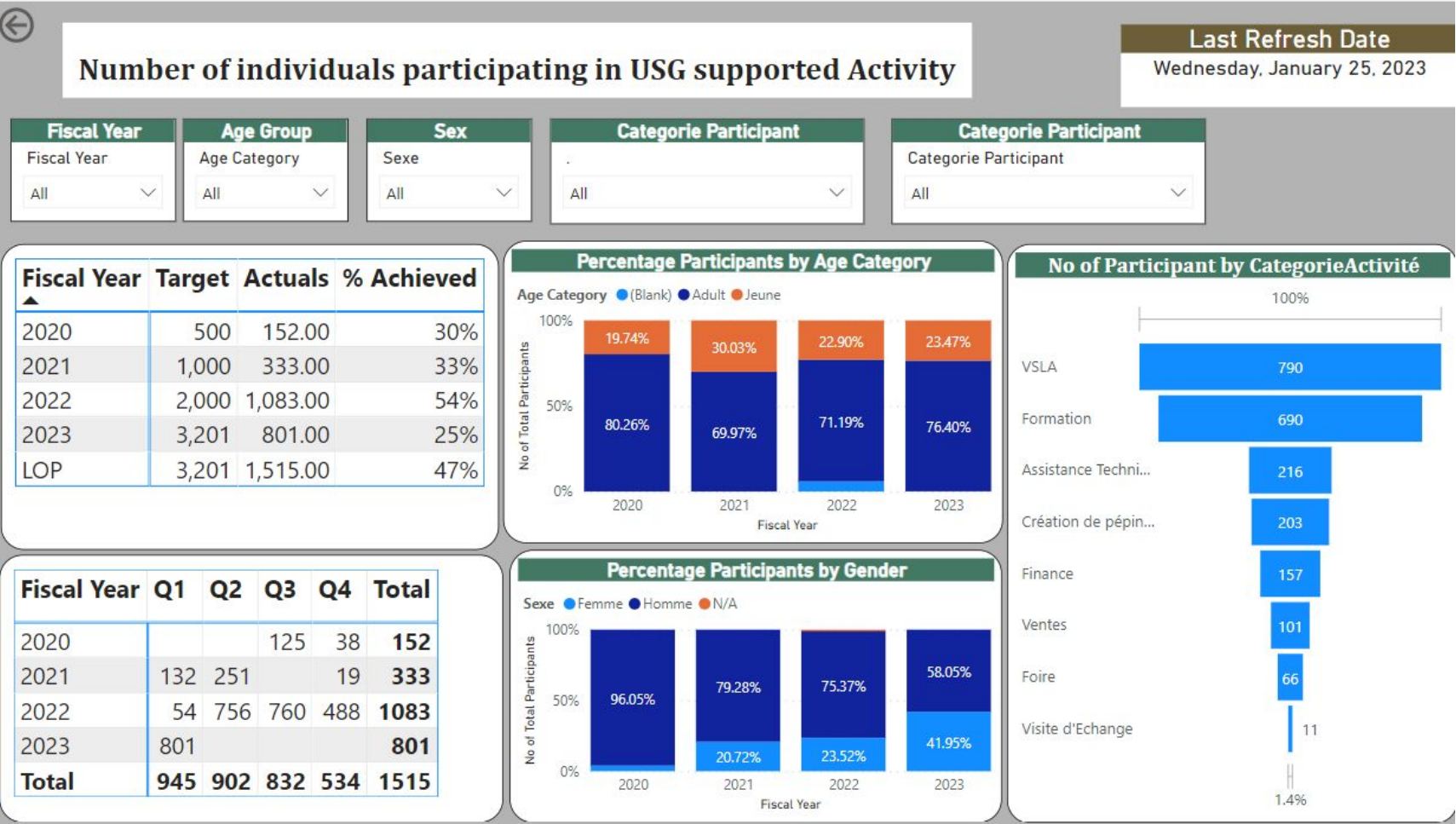
- Test Forms with dummy data
- Training of Trainers (ToT)

Development of Project Indicator Dashboards in PowerBI

Sample Database Schema



Sample Power BI Dashboard



Database Maintenance & Support

- Two Levels for Field Project Teams
 - First line Support -Project MIS team
 - Second Line Support-ACDI/VOCA HQ MERL Team
- Project Support Areas
 - Database modifications
 - Access Control
 - Data Integrity Checks
 - Bulk Data Uploads
 - Data Synchronization Issues
 - Dashboard modification
- HQ Support Areas
 - Corporate Indicator Reporting



Using the ActivityInfo

- Mobile app component of AI has simplified data synchronization
- Bulk Data Upload
 - ✓ Easy to use bulk upload feature
 - ✓ Ability to allow partial upload in case of validation issues
 - ✓ Upload Summary Review before final upload
- Syntax – Excel like syntax makes it easy to adapt
- User Interface

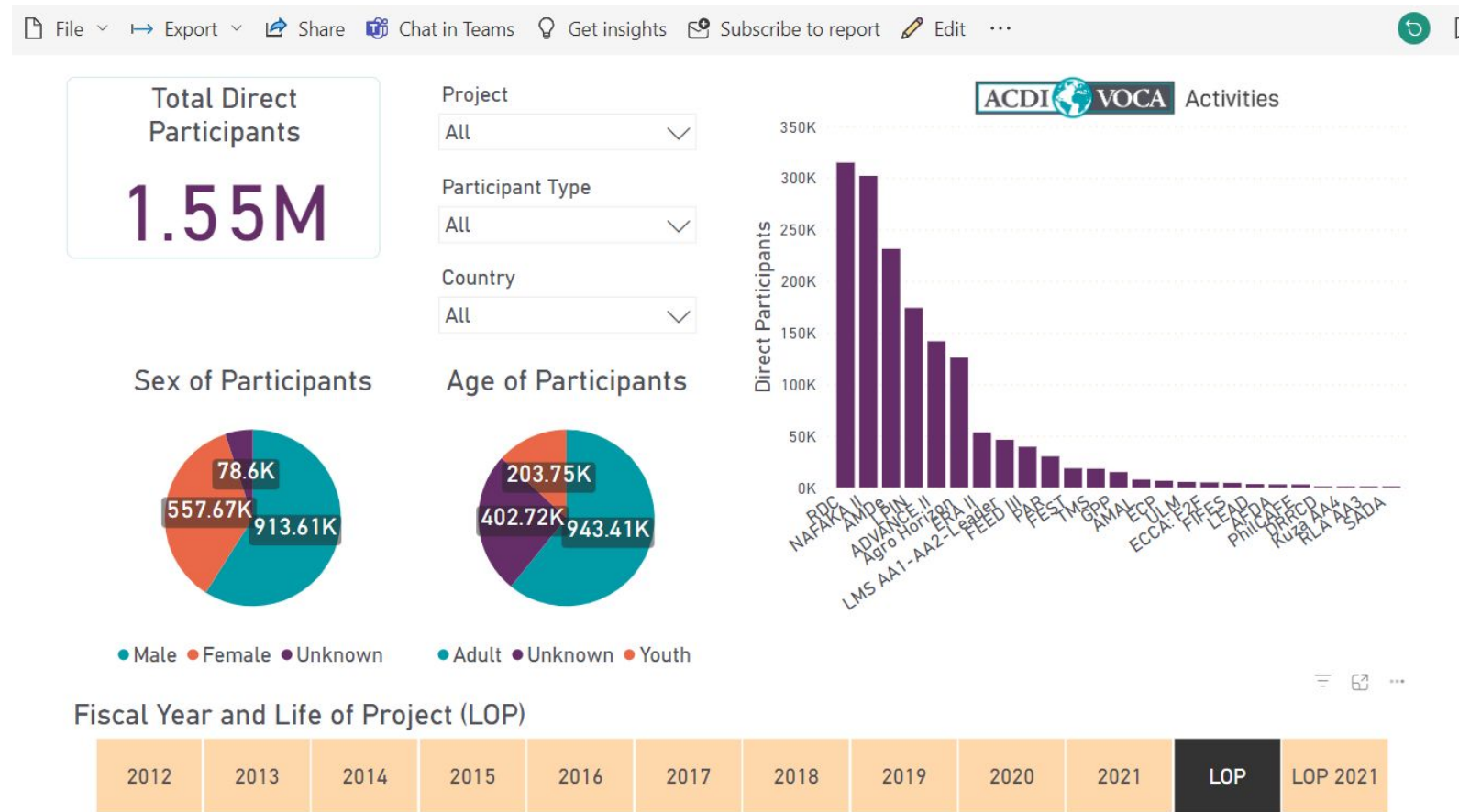
MEL at the Project Level

- Each project has a set of donor-required indicators
 - Each project database is built around these indicators
 - Routine data for output indicators is uploaded directly into the database
 - Outcome data is typically collected through annual surveys
- A Data Management Manual contains details on indicator calculations, sampling, verification documents and more
- Data at the individual & organization participant level must be non-duplicative, to the extent possible
- Data must be dated and auditable (with associated verification documents)



MEL at the Corporate Level

- ACDI/VOCA has a set of corporate indicators that are aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals
- Our organization produces a corporate Impact & Learning Report that utilizes data from across projects
- A MERL team space with a document library and conversation streams



Utilizing Data for Learning and Adaptive Management

- MEL Regional Knowledge Sharing hubs promote cross-project dialogue & mentorship
- The MERL & CLA Communities of Practice provides capacity-building webinars/ opportunities



CAPACITY BUILDING



Summary

- Our MEL system is designed to serve accountability and learning functions
- Data quality and integrity are critical
- The data management and information system must have adequate analytical tools to enable rigorous data analysis
- We chose ActivityInfo because the platform is;
 - User friendly and integrates online/offline mobile data collection features
 - Data integrity and audit trails,
 - Enables data aggregation from different projects for corporate level analysis (*work in progress*)
 - Piloting and migration from previous system was managed centrally

Lessons and Recommendations (1)

- Involvement of the field teams from scratch
- Visualization
- Use of DAX Functions



Lessons and Recommendations (2)

- Data quality has been enhanced as:
 - verification documents can be directly uploaded;
 - more traceability in data entry;
 - the bulk upload feature identifies data quality issues
- Mobile data entry platforms that interface directly with the database are crucial
- Large number of user tutorials and webinars
- Direct issue/trouble shooting support from ActivityInfo
- Challenges during the pilot phase due to complex projects and the identification of new feature 'asks'
- Standardized MEL policies & resources ensures crucial best practices happen