

MEGAN E. O'DONNELL

SUMMARY & HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. O'Donnell has over 15 years of experience in economic development, focused on agricultural livelihoods, value chain assessment, and sustainable development and developing digital services for vulnerable populations. Ms. O'Donnell has extensive experience with public and private sector clients including USAID, the UN, the EU and the World Bank and in industries ranging from agriculture to tourism, telecommunications and financial services.

Education: M.A. International Economics, Stanford University, 1996; B.A. Economics, Stanford University, 1995.

Languages: English – Native, French – Fluent, Italian – Basic, Spanish – Basic.

Country work experience: Tanzania, Ghana, DRC, the Gambia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Nicaragua, Honduras, Mongolia, Moldova, Mozambique, Myanmar, Kosovo, Indonesia, Philippines and the Caribbean.

Areas of expertise: mobile technology, public-private partnerships, entrepreneurship, value chain analysis, sustainable investment, trade and development, economic research and analysis and cross-cultural client relations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CONSULTANT – INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2008-present

Independent, New York, NY

Agricultural Value Chain Development: Promoting Sustainable Growth

Executed successful economic development programs.

- *Buyer requirements study to increase the Tanzanian tourism industry's local sourcing of fresh fruits and vegetables & analysis of women's roles in agriculture and their use of information and communications technologies (ICT)*, UN International Trade Centre, 2016.
 - Conducted an assessment of production and supply capabilities of targeted farmers in Arusha and coastal regions to satisfy buyer requirements; this included the identification of gaps in current performance, volumes, types and variety of products.
 - Assessed competitiveness of suppliers' environment for five key fruit and vegetable products including organization of the buyers' supply chain and typical problems faced with a focus on quality.
 - Presented core findings at June stakeholder workshop in Arusha, with producers, hotels, supermarkets and retail buyers.
 - Assessing the demand for ICT-based services in agriculture in Tanzania and identified challenges that exist to empower women in agriculture and recommend areas where women's associations need to strengthen advocacy and representation for information and digitization.
 - Conducted institutional assessment of implementing organizations such as the Tanzania Horticultural Association and the Hotel Association of Tanzania and recommended support activities.
- *USAID/Mozambique Conservation Alternative Livelihood Analysis*. Performed value chain assessments for two low-resource regions, Lubombo Conservancy Area and Gorongosa National Park, with the goal of creating income-generating opportunities to deter wildlife crimes. Selected four target value chains in each including honey, maize, tomatoes and tourism. Client: ACDI/VOCA, 2016.
- *Value chain assessment in two regions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), USAID/DRC*. Six value chains in each region were assessed on criteria including how potential interventions could create inclusive growth (reducing poverty), improve food security, support women and youth and be climate change robust. Client: ACDI/VOCA, 2015.
 - Using a market-systems value chain approach, an end market analysis; interviewed 100+ stakeholders in the field to guide the design of new agricultural activities that will promote inclusive growth to reduce poverty, while increasing food security and improving nutrition.
 - Oversaw a climate change assessment based upon the criteria of climate exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity contributing to biodiversity and the sustainable support of income-generating activities.
 - Delivered two-day workshop to USAID/DRC to support program design and work plan development.
- *Global Shea Alliance Sustainable Development Initiative*. Supporting mission to drive a competitive and sustainable shea industry worldwide, improving the livelihoods of rural African women and their communities. GSA, 2013-present.
 - Assisting GSA in developing conservation-related partnerships with organizations such as the World Agroforestry Centre.
 - Promoting GSA sustainability guidelines, including workplace health and safety, women's business and parkland management topics, development of local communities and the protection of ecosystems by outlining best business practices for all stakeholders.
 - Performed policy analysis for the government of Ghana's Ministry of Agriculture related to pricing floors for shea nuts to promote livelihoods for millions of shea gatherers.
- *Value chain and market development to achieve biodiversity and sustainable incomes, USAID/Peru*. The "Identifying Commercial Opportunities for Wood Species" market development assessment identified new business linkages for local suppliers of Peruvian wood species by analyzing global supply and demand factors. Client: 2020DC, 2012.

- The goal was to sustain biodiversity, recommending interventions to upgrade standards and linking exporters with new partners.
- The project also aimed to create alternative livelihoods to diversify income generation away from non-sustainable wood sourcing.
- *Assessed value chain for eight key sectors and designed intervention program, Tanzania, World Bank.* Identified the highest value opportunities to support eight key sectors, examining productivity, access to markets, sustainability and conservation factors and quality control. Client: JE Austin, 2009.
 - Focus on the sustainable tourism sector and the government of Tanzania's national park strategy related to taxes and regulations balanced with global demand factors.
 - Convened Tanzanian public and private sector stakeholders, hosted workshops, consulted 100+ private and public sector representatives and managed team of field consultants.
- *Increased trade and investment in Ethiopian agriculture, USAID/Ethiopia.* Connected small and medium chickpea, honey and sesame export businesses with global markets. Trained farmer cooperatives on effective marketing and sustainable growth practices and set up meetings with 80+ buyers. Developing business plans for exporters, including financing requirements, improved marketing materials for farmer cooperative unions and other exporters. Ensured compliance with biodiversity and conservation principles, including achievement of global certifications. Client: 2020DC, 2012-2013.
- *Expanded export opportunities of Pakistani mangos to the EU, USAID/Pakistan.* Identified EU market opportunities, accompanied Pakistani exporters to visit buyers in Europe and initiated trial shipment with Pakistani mango exporters. Client: 2020DC, 2011-2012.
- *Business model development for sustainable tourism portal.* Developed business plan and investment prospectus for online sustainable travel network, TravelSTAR, in Latin America. Oversaw team to develop strategy for this innovative mechanism connecting US vacationers and investors with responsible travel destinations in Costa Rica and Ecuador. Worked in partnership with the Stanford University-based Center for Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD). Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), 2007

Launching Successful Digital Development Programs

Designing and launching innovative partnerships leveraging information and communication technologies technology (ICT) to improve livelihoods in developing countries.

- *Advising on mobile money demand-side research for the Gates Foundation's Financial Inclusion Initiative.* Providing insights to position the analytical framework for in-depth data collection and analysis of the demand side digital financial services, with a focus on mobile banking. The research examines usage patterns and behaviors, pathways and barriers to expanded use. Focus countries include India, Pakistan Bangladesh, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda. See research and data at the following [link](#). Client: InterMedia, 2014-2015. This includes examining:
 - Drivers and barriers to adoption of mobile banking, including technical literacy consumer fraud issues and proximity of banks.
 - Usage patterns and behaviors in the uptake and use of mobile banking.
 - Focus is on unbanked populations including females, those living below the poverty line and rural farmers.
 - The agent experience including costs of services as well as account registration issues.
- *Created GSMA's Women in Agriculture: A Toolkit for Mobile Practitioners focusing on the commercial and social opportunity to deliver services to the rural women's market segment.* Creating GSMA mWomen and mAgri-sponsored Gender Handbook for mobile operators and development practitioners to deploy commercially sustainable, mobile-enabled services that strengthen women farmers' participation in agricultural value chains. Client: GSMA, 2014.
- *Developed mFarmer GSMA partnership for mobile agricultural solutions.* Drafted successful proposal and mobilized \$3 million mFarmer Program developing mobile agriculture information solutions in partnership with USAID and the Gates Foundation. Client: GSMA, 2012-3.
- *Mobile money training for women entrepreneurs, TechCamp - El Salvador.* Trained women entrepreneurs on how to integrate mobile payment systems into their businesses. US Department of State, 2015.
- *Better than Cash Alliance electronic payments advocacy program, UN Capital Development Fund.* Advised the UN's financial inclusion unit on deployment of the Better than Cash Alliance advocacy strategy, in partnership with USAID Mobile Solutions and others. Overseeing team of four consultants examining ecosystems of payment systems in 12 developing countries including India, Pakistan, Senegal, Tanzania, Indonesia and Morocco. Intermedia, 2013.
 - Recommended advocacy action plan for UN's Financial Inclusion Unit to deliver technical assistance in 12 countries to influence the shift of large-scale payment streams from cash to electronic.
 - Created framework to analyze market readiness and path to conversion of large payment streams from cash to digital.
 - Oversaw team of consultants examining digital payment systems in 12 developing countries: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Senegal, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Indonesia, Brazil, Chile and Morocco.
 - Developed full set of data collection tools including interview questions, desktop research guide, report templates; oversaw team of five consultants to collect primary and secondary research from 12 countries
 - Interviewed decision-makers who currently manage the payment of large volumes of cash streams to understand barriers and challenges to converting to digital payments.
 - Recommended UN engagement with technology companies, other development partners and government.

- ***Launched GSMA mWomen program, London, UK.*** Raised \$10 million, designed and launched GSMA Mobile for Development's mWomen Program, a public/private partnership with USAID, AusAID and Visa Corporation focused on Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Client: GSMA, 2011-2013.
- Oversaw development of the mWomen Impact Pathway, a logical framework used to measure inputs, outputs, and outcomes, demonstrating how access to mobile services for development can bring about short, medium, and long term change that improves lives.
- Developed research focused on financial services (mobile money) for underserved women and secured implementation partner. Successful transition and handover to permanent director.
- Created the mWomen Business Case Framework which guides mobile practitioners in targeting underserved women. Worked closely with mobile operators in key markets to develop the mWomen opportunity and create a framework for understanding the key profitability drivers.
- Mentored GSMA project staff and program heads including advising on analytical frameworks, creating templates for creating case studies and interacting with donor partners.
- ***Research on technology solutions for agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa, USAID.*** Published briefing paper *Using ICT to Enhance Marketing for Small Agricultural Producers* to guide product developers and the donor community in identifying appropriate and effective ICT solutions for value chain interventions to empower agricultural producers. Client: FHI 360, 2013.
- ***Initiated mobile learning partnership with Accenture and the government of Tanzania.*** Developed partnership strategy and drafted proposal for mobile learning program for secondary and vocational schools in partnership with the government of Tanzania. Client: Accenture Development Partners, 2012.

Advising Donors on-Private Partnership Strategy

- ***Advised USAID's Office of Private Sector Partnership.*** Supported partnerships globally in the areas of health, food security, climate change and disaster relief. Client: Dexis Consulting Group, Washington, DC, 2010-2011.
 - Advised USAID in developing partnerships globally via the Agency's network of Missions and partners to enhance development outcomes. Conceived and launched knowledge management strategy in partnership with social media network Devex.com resulting in the successful 'Devex Impact' site.
 - Collaborated with the White House Council on Environmental Quality to convene public-private sector dialogues. Convened and led discussions for climate adaptation focus group with the White House Council on Environmental Quality to discuss climate adaptation. Participants included Google, Intel, Mars, Nokia and 30+ others with interests in developing countries.
 - Supported data collection and analysis to inform USAID alliances; developed criteria to evaluate new potential partnerships for USAID with the private sector; interviewed 44 missions globally on private sector partnership strategy to drive USAID activities.
 - Provided training support to USAID/PSA on PPPs. Developed and implemented training courses for USAID employees, implementers and private sector partners.

PROJECT MANAGER – ECONOMIC GROWTH

2003-2007

Consultant and Project Manager, Dexis Consulting Group, Washington, DC

Managed implementation teams, stakeholder relations, strategic planning and economic analysis for private sector development projects for the World Bank, UNDP, the EU and USAID including:

- ***Business plan for investment promotion center, Mozambique, World Bank.*** Developed a 3-year strategic business plan for this government agency dedicated to promoting the country's economic growth. CPI implemented the government's decentralization and backward linkages policy and thus contributed to increased investment and employment in the country. Client: Dexis. (2003)
- ***Expanded Mongolia's sustainable cashmere industry, USAID, 2005-7.*** Supported the sustainable growth of the cashmere industry by creating a business association and branding strategy, linking producers to export markets. See link below in publications for the Mongolian Fibermark Society strategic plan. Analyzed potential demand from select cashmere buyers in Hong Kong, China and internationally. Provided due diligence and accompanied Chinese cashmere production investors on site visit to Mongolia.
- ***Promoted foreign investment and improved the investment environment in the Gambia, World Bank, 2006-2008.*** Assessed competitiveness of Gambian focus sectors including tourism, fisheries, agro-processing and manufacturing using regional comparative analysis. Developed three-year strategic plan for the Gambia Investment Promotion and Free Zone Agency whose mandate was to promote investment in the country and to stimulate economic growth.
- ***Strategic Plan / Monitoring & Evaluation System for Investment Agency, The Gambia.*** Developed a strategic plan for the Gambia Investment Promotion and Free Zone Agency (GIPFZA). Consulted with local private sector and public sector stakeholders to determine optimal positioning for GIPFZA in the local institutional setting. Developed strategic plan for promotion of investment in tourism, fisheries and light manufacturing. Dexis, Washington, DC, 2005-6
- ***Assessed social impact of foreign investment in Nicaragua, UNDP, 2007-8.*** Assessed impact of ProNicaragua's programs which promote and integrate foreign investment into the country, on economic growth, productivity and regional distribution. Performed analysis focused on tourism, manufacturing and technology industries.
- ***Increased exports and sustainable investment in the high-value horticulture industry, Ghana, USAID, 2005-7.*** Prepared value chain analysis focused on competitiveness of the pineapple, papaya, mango, and fresh vegetables sectors. Focus included small and

medium enterprises, business service providers, input providers and supporting services. Mentored project staff to host investors exploring horticulture sector opportunities in Ghana.

- *Business cost analysis, Africa, World Bank.* Performed research and analysis for the Global Enterprise Benchmarking Project for 17 countries in Africa as input to a regional benchmarking initiative by the World Bank Group. Examined factors for sustaining a competitive business and investment environment.

Manager, Chemonics International, Washington, DC. Responsibilities in technical research and business development. 2002-2003

- *Proposal development.* Executed intelligence gathering trips for USAID bids including competitiveness projects in Kosovo, the Philippines and Indonesia. Managed teams of 10-15 people to prepare proposals for USAID bids.
- *Partnership development.* Strategized and pursued private sector partnerships for USAID to pursue with multinational corporations and NGOs to enhance economic impact, using the Global Development Alliance (GDA) mechanism.
- *MCC research and development, USAID/DC.* Performed analysis that examined consultative mechanisms and current economic growth competitiveness programs in target countries related to the formation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

VENTURE CAPITAL ANALYST/ TECHNOLOGY ENTREPRENEUR

1997-1999

Entrepreneur and Business Development Director, Netsertion Ltd. Oxford, UK, 2001-2

Re-positioned business strategy for start-up technology company that developed an algorithm to track digital media online for anti-piracy and market intelligence purposes. Created and oversaw team of 10 employees to synchronize financial projections, technology milestones and sales goals. Successfully raised second-round funding from Oxford Venture Partners and angel investors.

GE Capital Ventures/Prime Capital Management, New York, NY, 1997-1999

Identified and executed strategic investments complementary to GE businesses. Explored new markets and emerging technology investment opportunities in the information systems medical technology, power systems and telecommunications industries. 12 investments completed ranging from \$1-10 million.

- Prepared written analysis of new markets and investment opportunities to present within GE and to complementary co-investors. Analyzed financial statements, business plans to determine strategic and financial investment potential. Researched new markets and emerging technology investment opportunities in the power systems, medical, telecommunications and information systems industries.
- Drafted business plans, financial projections performed company valuations for innovative technology companies to facilitate the closing of equity placements. Coordinated communications between emerging technology firms and GE businesses to facilitate the deal making process.

EDUCATION

MA, International Development Policy (Economics Department), Stanford University, Stanford, CA, 1996

BA, Economics, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, 1995

LANGUAGES

English – Native, French – Fluent, Italian – Intermediate, Spanish – Basic

CITIZENSHIP

USA

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- ['Assessment of the DRC's Agricultural Market Systems](#), value chain assessment of six commodities each in the regions of Katanga and the Kivus
 - [GSMA Women in Agriculture: A Toolkit for Mobile Practitioners](#), a guide for mobile operators and development practitioners to deploy commercially sustainable, mobile-enabled services
 - [Briefing Paper: Using ICT to Enhance Marketing for Small Agricultural Producers](#), report on how ICT solutions can empower agricultural producers by improving their marketing capabilities
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