Report for the UN Women’s Innovative Market Place on Women’s Socio-Economic Empowerment in Africa Hosted at the Timeless Conference

February 10th 2016- Royal Orchid Hotel, Nairobi- Kenya

Conference Theme: Taking the Next Step

A panel on transforming agribusiness for accelerated growth and food security in Africa at the Timeless Conference 2016. The panel was composed of UN Women’s Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa- Ms. Christine Musisi, Hon Gerald Githinji-Deputy Governor- Kiambu County in Kenya, Ms Pansi Katenga- Country Manager-Christian Aid and other high profile delegates
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1.0 Executive Summary

UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa regional office organized a Market Place at the Timeless Conference 2016. Through a call for innovations, a catalogue of innovations/ initiatives in socio economic empowerment of women in Africa was developed - please see [http://africa.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/02/innovative-market-place-on-womens-socio-economic-empowerment-in-africa](http://africa.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/02/innovative-market-place-on-womens-socio-economic-empowerment-in-africa). In the Market Place, initiatives around cross border trade were shared. In this regard, TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) shared their work in addressing the gender-based constraints that prevent women from participating in regional and international trade.

Initiatives around energy and environment were also showcased. The National Environment Trust Fund showcased their support to rural households in the upsaling of innovative and cost effective interventions to expand the off-grid access of rural households to electricity through mini-hydroelectricity generation. Green Energy Africa has showcased their work on increasing the use of solar energy as an alternative form of energy in Kenya.

Innovative models of entrepreneurial initiatives targeting women entrepreneurs were also shared at the Market Place. While Small and Medium Entrepreneurial Resource Centre-SME offers information, assistance and empowerment in entrepreneurship to women entrepreneurs, Etiquette Xllent provides professional etiquette skills development to women entrepreneurs.

Agricultural and environmental innovations were showcased including that of KPMC which provides comprehensive inputs and packages to farmers. In the category, The Hive Ltd also showcases an integrated Apibusiness model of The Hive Beekeepers Kits which aims to economically empower women by introducing them to Apibusiness. Another initiative by Christian Aid Malawi which delivers positive and sustainable change in the lives of 9000 Malawian small holder farmers through increasing productivity and incomes whilst creating an environment that promotes growth of pigeon peas value chain has also been documented. Botanic Treasures Ltd shared how they transform lives through nutrition - working with over 500 small holder farmers to cultivate highly nutritious, drought resistant Moringa tree and processing the plant into marketable health food products that are marketed nationally and internationally.

Women’s engagement in the male dominated sectors like the construction industry was also showcased by the Timeless Women of Wonder Foundation.

Finally, a regional innovation focusing on women in the extractive industries was showcased in the Market Place. The initiative, hosted by UN Women Eastern and Southern Regional Office in collaboration with the African Union, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and various partners focused on the overarching theme of Building on Good Practices while offering an inspiration for sharing knowledge and experiences, establishing partnerships and developing solutions to stimulate interest and collaborative efforts in engendering the extractive industries in Africa. It also generated concrete business linkages to women in the extractive industries.

It is our hope that the documented initiatives are replicated to increase and expand impact on women’s lives in our countries and communities. At its core, the Market Place functioned through gallery dialogues, knowledge mapping and sharing, and production of knowledge products exhibiting selected initiatives on women’s socio-economic empowerment. This is also premised on the fact that South-South (S-S) cooperation has been on the radar screen for several years now. Finding mechanisms to make it work is a challenge for all stakeholders who believe S-S cooperation can significantly support development. The Market Place offered a sustainable solution to South-South Corporation besides offering a platform for regional linkages.
2.0 Introduction

In 2015 Timeless Conference focused on “HEALING HEELS” ... transforming mindsets, attitudes and destroying limiting belief patterns to move into a limitless thought pattern with a positive mindset and attitude for optimization of potential and resources for women.

In 2016, Timeless Conference took the conversation higher as it dialogued on what we must now do if Africa is going to achieve exponential socio-economic growth. The theme “TAking THE STEP” challenged the women of Africa to take a step to shift the status quo and begin to realize tangible impact in all areas pertinent to social and economic transformation of Africa.

The conference looked at the key drivers of social and economic changes and discuss the roles of various stakeholders in building sustainable change.

2016 Timeless Women’s Conference was used as an opportunity to share great initiatives/ innovations/ interventions and programmes that create social and economic impacts in the lives of women in Africa. These initiatives are replicable and can be shared on a wider scale. These were shared in a market place at the conference with global participants who included business leaders, development partners, governments, civil society, the private sector players and other players in the economy. They were initiatives with evidenced impact in the countries of operations. The market place provided a space for all selected interventions to be profiled by way of a knowledge product and a booth to share what has worked or what is working and why. Three best initiatives were selected for awards and oral presentation at the market place. This was an opportunity for the region to link to potential partners, governments, donors and development agencies and convince them that we do real initiatives that are replicable in certain contexts while creating a space for external knowledge mobilization and dissemination.
3.0 Purpose of the Market Place
The main purpose of the market place was to create a culture of innovative business models & initiatives that guarantee wealth and job creation while implementing ideas that create socio-economic transformation in the lives of women in Africa.

4.0 Objectives of the Market Place
✓ To showcase one key country and regional initiatives, best practices and/ or innovation in socio-economic interventions in Eastern and Southern Africa.

✓ The market place sought to showcase programmes on social and economic empowerment and provided evidence information on the impact of these programmes at various levels including policies, institutions and in the lives of women.

✓ To document the best practices/innovations and produce a knowledge product of Socio-economic empowerment of women Market Place and share with development partners who could contact organizations showcasing at their own levels.

5.0 Eligibility Criteria for the Market Place

5.1 Who was selected to showcase at the Market Place?
✓ African-based based public or private, governmental or non-governmental, research and development organizations and academic institutions.
✓ Individuals representing an African-based public or private, governmental or non-governmental, research and development organizations and academic institutions.
✓ Organizations/ Individuals must possess the required competencies to support innovation within the institution.
5.2 Initiative/ Innovation General Guidelines

- The initiatives/ innovations were all related to socio-economic interventions only.
- Initiatives/ innovations are implemented in Africa to the benefit of African women.
- Initiatives/ innovations were submitted in English

6.0 Assessment Criteria for Initiatives Showcased at the Market Place

The initiatives/ innovations showcased were assessed on the basis of their innovativeness and replicability, results and socio-economic impacts, tested and working methodologies by the Market Place Screening Committee. The screening process focused on

- **Initiatives/ Innovations Definition**- Only initiatives which clearly described their project’s rationale and the specific problem that they had addressed were selected.

- **Objectives**- Only those initiatives that clearly and specifically stated the initiatives/ innovations objective(s) linked to socio-economic empowerment and indicated the primary targeted beneficiary group as women and girls were selected for the showcase.

- **Methodology**- Only those initiatives that described clearly and in detail the methods used to achieve the initiatives/ innovations objectives, including measurements and indicators with an estimate of the number of women reached during initiatives/ innovations implementation were selected to showcase at the Market Place

- **Innovation and replicability**- Innovation is a major differentiating element for the Market Place. The initiatives/ innovations were assessed according to how they differ from existing approaches and their replicability

- **Results and Socio-Economic Development Impact** - Only those that described their results and the development impacts of the initiatives/ innovations with clear, discrete and measurable indicators were selected to showcase at the Market Place.

7.0 Market Place Selection Process

This call for initiatives/ innovations was a 2-step competitive process. Applicants are requested to submit an initiative/ innovation for evaluation and, if selected, were requested to showcase it at the Timeless Women’s conference in February 2016. Only top three rated initiatives/ innovations were awarded at the conference while up to 11 initiatives/ innovations were showcased at the market place through allocated booths for the agencies and corporate organizations selected.

- Step 1. All submitted initiatives/ innovations will be screened by the Market Place Screening Committee (SC) for eligibility based on an assessment criteria.

- Step 2. Further screening was done to select top three initiatives/ innovations by the Market Place Judges at the conference after which they were awarded for their outstanding social- economic impact in the lives of women.
8.0 Exhibition Booth at the Market Place
11 initiatives/innovations selected were packaged in a publication by UN Women and Timeless Women of Wonder and showcased at the market place. Organizations/Agencies selected also showcased diverse knowledge products related to the initiatives. The products showcased included publications, video clips, charts, photos, newspaper clips, slide shows, reports among other products and services by the agencies showcasing.

9.0 The Initiatives at the Market Place were by;
- UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Region
- TradeMark East Africa, TMEA
- Botanic Treasures Ltd
- Christian Aid Malawi
- CPF Financial Services Limited
- Etiquette Xllent Company Ltd
- Green Energy Africa
- KPMC Holdings
- National Environment Trust Fund, Kenya
- Small and Medium Entrepreneurial Resource Centre
- The Hive Limited
- Timeless Women of Wonder Foundation

10.0 Market Place Methodology
At the Market Place, each organization/agency presented only one best practice/innovation but were encouraged to share various knowledge products that they have produced through their booths at the market place. At its core, the Market Place functioned through gallery dialogues, knowledge mapping and sharing, and production of knowledge products exhibiting selected initiatives on women’s socio-economic empowerment. The Market Place offers a sustainable solution to South- South Corporation besides offering a platform for regional linkages.
11.0 Reporting the Success

11.1 Opening Remarks at the Market Place by Ms. Zebib Kavuma- Country Director- UN Women Kenya

At the opening session of the Market Place, presided over by UN Women’s country director for Kenya- Ms. Zebib Kavuma-left, she reiterated UN Women's commitment to empowering women and promoting inclusiveness. "It is not only the right thing to do but it also makes good business sense and promotes sustainable development. We work with Government, Civil Society Organizations, the Academia as well as the Private Sector to remove all forms of discrimination against women and to promote inclusive social and economic development. Specifically the director shared various initiatives towards enhancing women’s participation in politics and leadership, advancing women’s economic empowerment, enhancing women’s peace and security, ending violence against women and promoting gender-responsive national planning and budgeting.

“More and more we are also facilitating and engaging in forums that bring together men and women to discuss issues that affect us all and find context specific solutions and especially highlighting the important role of men as change agents for gender equality and women’s empowerment.” Added the director for UN Women in Kenya.

She challenged delegates at the conference to imagine what the millions of African women and girls could accomplish if their full capacity were unleashed, if barriers to education, health, rights, decision-making and full participation in socio-economic empowerment were removed. Women would be at the very Centre of sustainable development. When empowered, they can produce a cascade of positive changes with benefits that go beyond simple economic growth. She further alluded to studies which have proven that women invest their earnings in the well-being of their children to a far greater extent than do men. Their empowerment therefore tends to have an inter-generational impact on health and education that benefits societies for generations to come, while bolstering the much-needed human capital that countries need to overcome poverty and social exclusion.
11.2 The Success

The Market Place event was successful with concrete business linkages, creating a platform for company-company networking, knowledge mobilization, dissemination and agency positioning in regard to women’s socio-economic empowerment. It united over 150 delegates from the United Nations, CSOs, governments, private sector, consultancy, INGOs and academia. These delegates connected, shared knowledge, and collaborated – to accelerate the transition to a sustainable socio-economic empowerment of women in Africa. The session on the Market Place showcased case studies, good practices and innovations by diverse organizations/ agencies demonstrating good practices in operationalizing normative framework on Women’s Socio-Economic Empowerment. The initiatives were innovative and cutting edge examples of interventions/ programmes that could be replicated elsewhere and scaled up for impact to increase socio-economic impacts on women and girls in Africa. They demonstrated evidence on how organizations/ agencies work on women’s socio-economic empowerment and have contributed to improving women’s social and economic empowerment in Africa.

During the Timeless Conference, UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Women’s Economic Empowerment team submitted the Knowledge Sharefair in the Extractive Industries Report as an innovation and participated in the innovative market place on women’s socio-economic empowerment. The team also showcased The Cost of the Gender Gap Study conducted in 2015. The publications distributed include 400 Catalogues of exhibitions, 200 Sharefair reports and 100 Gender gap study reports. The cost of the gender gap study generated a lot of interest with many participants asking for more copies. The participants were directed to the UN Women website where they can access the soft copy of the report. Many participants were also interested in participating in upcoming UN Women events, as well as collaborating with UN Women on gender related issues. There were women in boards from county governments who were interested in the ACTIL training programmes, some sought to find out about UN Women’s work on peace and security and one participant specifically wanted to find out what UN Women is doing in the issue of disaster resilience.

The conference analyzed and delved into the notions of ‘difference’ and ‘diversity,’ more specifically, into their innovation and scalability, making recommendations and reception of Market Place dialogues through different narrative strategies and/or modes of narrativization.
12.0 Result of the Market Place

- Evidence on how organizations/agencies’ work on women’s economic empowerment have contributed to improving women’s social and economic empowerment in Africa.
- Examples of agencies’ sector specific interventions and their impact on women’s lives in Africa packaged into a publication which is available on UN Women’s website for Africa as part of accelerating progress towards good practice replication of interventions around women’s socio-economic empowerment in Africa.
- Information on innovative and cutting edge examples of interventions/programmes that could be replicated elsewhere and scaled up for impact.
- Networking and business to business linkages where participants established essential linkages adding to partnerships and business models by the agencies showcasing products requiring market linkages.
- Created a knowledge sharing and mobilization platform with external stakeholders as part of UN Women’s Knowledge Management strategy for 2014-2017.

13.0 Lessons Learnt and the Message for UN Women

The discussions at the UN Women Market Place outlined that socio-economic initiatives in Africa have immense impact in the lives of women. Nevertheless, they still face substantial challenges which can only be met by powerful networks and collaborations of agencies, initiatives, entrepreneurs, investors and other stakeholders. The problems discussed at the Market Place pointed to a systemic lack of capacity in the ecosystem that social-economic enterprises operate in and cut across country boundaries, technology and business models. An important message UN Women took away was the fact that these hurdles can only be resolved by powerful networks and collaborations of initiatives/interventions, programmes, development agencies, entrepreneurs, the private sector, the United Nations family, regional economic commissions and other stakeholders.

To rise to this challenge UN Women will not only continue to mobilize knowledge and information on socio-economic empowerment of women but will also encourage collaboration for greatness. Furthermore UN Women will increasingly figure out its opportunities to spread the impact of modern knowledge management and research tools and experience more broadly. This will include expanding the market place concept to other UN Women events and activities in the countries in Eastern and Southern Africa as well as developing suitable policy recommendations and continuing to convene cross-stakeholder meetings. All in all, the Market Place provided a valuable platform to build a community of socio-economic initiatives with entrepreneurs, practitioners and supporters of social and economic interventions in Africa.
14.0 Case Studies from the Market Place

14.1 Kuza-Uza Program: Innovative Grain Storage and Trade for Women Farmers by Kenya Promotions and Marketing Company (KPMC) - Award Winner

Kenya Promotions and Marketing Company (KPMC) made a contributing story on the success of post-harvest grain storage bags for women farmers in Kenya in a project presented during Timeless women conference dubbed Kuza–Uza which means, Grow & Sell. This simple technology was adopted for women farmers especially in maize farming since it is a key cash crop in Kenya, and in most occasions the harvested grain is considered the man’s asset. In most communities, the pulses produced, mostly from intercropping, belong to the woman therefore Women face challenges in safe household food storage. Post-harvest losses for cereals are as high as 40% and Most of the grain is destroyed by storage pests such as weevils or by changes in the storage atmosphere which causes dampness and molding. Rodents are also an issue. High food loses means that there is little left for the family. It also means that women have to work longer hours to earn money to buy food, usually at much higher prices than the cost of food they had produced. On the other hand, stored food can be disposed off when the prevailing market prices are high, enabling a woman to improve her income status. Women invest most of their money on ensure better nutrition, health and education for their children. Food insecure households suffer from malnutrition and stunted growth, particularly in children.

In an innovative perspective, KPMC engineered a hermetic Grain Storage Bag where Hermetic means air tight. Women would therefore store their well dried grain under hermetic conditions making them remain fresh and free from pests. The combined respiration of the stored grains and pests create a high carbon dioxide environment which suffocates the weevils and neutralizes the ova’s, making the storage environment safe. The innovative bags are also engineered to keep the grain cool and because the bag is airtight, in a well-kept store, rodent attacks are minimized. These conditions enable the woman farmer to keep their grain safe.

Since women farmers cannot store that which they did not grow, Post-harvest losses have impacted the productivity of a their farms where In most cases, women farmers produce too little and with many competing household needs, the little produced is sold off to cater for pressing expenses. KPMC therefore came with the idea of supporting farmers to increase their productivity leveraging a sorghum supply contracts that garnered from a large grain processor to sub-contract smallholder farmers to produce. The innovation is dubbed Kuza – Uza which means, Grow & Sell.

KPMC goes the extra mile to ensure that farmers appreciate the benefits of intercropping the sorghum with a high value crop such as green grams or soya bean.
This not only impacts soil fertility, it also improves household food security and impacts a woman’s income. Since many women farmers do not have money at the point of harvest, it is challenging for them to buy the Grain Storage Bags therefore they contract the women farmers, provide them with an input kit which includes the Grain Storage Bags. By availing the Grain Storage Bags at the beginning of the season women farmers can keep their current harvest safe, while they wait for their new crop to be harvested.

Through this program KPMC is currently working with more than 8,000 women producers across four counties in Kenya and it is the first time, many women have learned about better grain storage methods. The program has integrated financial services including crop insurance more accessible to women. Because the women are paid on check off basis, many of them are now willing to open a bank account and join saving groups for sustaining farming practice. KPMC is helping women to establish grain collection and trading centers and educating them on fair market prices for their produce. KPMC has also introduced electronic grain weighing to increase fairness in the pricing of commodity at the same time building a network of community knowledge workers, most of them women, who earn their keep by dispensing input kits, insurance, education and providing grain aggregation services.

The Challenges
Despite success endeavors, KPMC has had challenges especially in areas where they operate, reaching new farmers and earning their trust enough for them to engage, has been a great challenge. Women are particularly not averse to taking commercial risks, let alone taking a loan. To mitigate this, KPMC works through partnerships with other more established organizations such as Christian Aid to reach the communities. This has reduced the cost of extension work and therefore enables them to pay farmers a little more for their commodity, as compared to the competition. KPMC partnerships foster a win-win-win situation for the community, the partner organizations and for KPMC. They provide much needed market linkages, new technologies and value chain services that the partner organizations need to make their programs wholesome. They also ensure that they partner with the County Governments. Supporting the County Governments to deliver effective extension and market linkages enables them to meet their development goals. Their endorsement also helps to foster trust with the communities, and this is vital for success.

The success
A key success has been the ability for KPMC to establish market linkages for 2,500 metric tonnes of sorghum for smallholder farmers and engaging mostly women to produce. Another success has been the ability to avail an affordable, easy to use hermetic technology that women can use to keep their grains safe. They have also introduced financial services and insurance in a sustainable way enabling women, who would otherwise remain unbanked, to gain access. Women are learning how to undertake contract farming, adhere to contract terms and quality standards. They train them to appreciate the costs of production and to calculate the gross margins from the sale of their produce. They provide them with record keeping booklets to help them keep track of their expenses and savings.
Photo: Women group in Kirinyaga County contracted to produce sorghum under the Kuza – Uza program from as little as an eighth of an acre to three acres. These women used the Grain Storage Bags to preserve green-grams for household food security and trade.

14.2 Women Friendly Honey Harvesting Technology by the Hive Limited- Award Winner

The integrated Apibusiness model of The Hive Beekeepers Kits is a holistic approach that is all inclusive in one package to minimize chances of failure. It involves a package of the real needed tools for successful startup, with minimum physical effort guided by practical trainings, field visits and market for the end products.

The initiative aims to economically empower women by introducing them in the Apibusiness. Through The Hive Beekeepers kit, the women are able to generate sustainable income especially with the ready market for the bee products. Enhance food security and improved livelihoods especially through improved crops pollination and selling of beekeeping products and forest seedling nurseries.

Women groups are provided with The Hive Beekeepers Starter kits where each kit is composed of the following components; 10 CAB Hives (Latest Version of Langstroth Model for the African bee), Bees wax foundation sheets for the 100 frames of the CAB hive, 2 Bee Suits (The Hive Brand), 2 pairs of gloves, 1 Smoker (The Hive brand), 1 Hive tool, 1 Stainless steel Extractor (Hive Brand), 1 Bee Brush (Hive brand), 1 Uncapping forks, Pair of strainers for sieving extracted honey, 1 Beekeeping practical guide, Practical training and field visits, Market for the honey, wax and pollen.
The CAB hives differ from the traditional hives in the sense that they are designed in such a way that is easy to fit all the need accessories for production of different products from bees’ activities. The approach is replicable as it only involves adding only CAB hives after acquisition of The Hive Beekeepers Starter Kit. A single CAB hive produces an average of 60kgs of honey annually and therefore the 10 CAB hives inside The Hive beekeepers Kit produce a minimum average of 600Kgs translating to USD 1,800 per annum. Already 15000+ women are beneficiaries in the following African Countries: Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Malawi, Chad, Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda and Zambia. The innovation works in all different types of Climatic conditions with measurable and profitable sustainable success.
The initiative works with over 500 small holder farmers to cultivate the highly nutritious, drought resistant Moringa tree. By leveraging on science, traditional knowledge and farming techniques of smallholder farmers to grow the Moringa oleifera tree. We process the plant into marketable health food products that are marketed nationally and internationally. From the leaves and fruits we produce and sell health nutritious foods for combating malnutrition, degenerative diseases, support food security and uplift the economic living standards of small holder farmers.

The main objectives of the initiative are to improving nutrition, promote the value chain of Moringa for profit advocate for agroforestry for increased forest cover, increase land use to expand agricultural production for women and girls and promote maternal health to reduce maternal deaths. It also links to research on indigenous foods that have been orphaned, advocate and train on growing of medicinal plants.

Botanic treasures works with over 500 farmers of which 60% are women. In partnership with Karlo and MOA it conducts training and workshops on nutrition, safe agricultural practices, and agroforestry and share seeds among small holders. It encourages farmers to keep 10% of the produce for domestic use. We collaborate with the farmers to build collection and processing centers’ where we produce high quality nutritional supplements and fortified foods that are distributed in over 50 chain stores locally and exported.

The initiative has leveraged on traditional knowledge and science to develop unique nutritious foods that utilize crops that do well in less productive areas like cassava, amaranth, millet, and Moringa oleifera which is rich in many nutrients, vitamins, proteins and recommended by WHO as a sustainable tool to fight malnutrition. This has Increasing land use, improved nutrition, empowered women and expanded agricultural export.
By focusing on key points in the nutritional value chain connecting soil, agriculture, food and people, the initiative has created a business system that improves the vitality of people and the natural ecosystems.

The initiative has created jobs and supported income generation for over 1000 people along the value chain from land preparation to marketing while also increasing land yield from Ksh 40,000 per acre to over Ksh 100,000 per acre. Purchase of moringa oleifera has increased by 100% every year.

The initiative generates income for smallholder farmers and their families. It also empowers women since it works with 80% female employees and 60% female farmers. It has improved maternal and child health by encouraging growers to keep 10% of Moringa for personal consumption, and by providing access to nutritional training. Moringa sanitized water reduces deaths of under-fives due to diarrhea and related infections. There has been economic empowerment of village communities by encouraging the creation of local social-environmental enterprises leading to cash income and increased purchasing power.
15.0 Voices from the Market Place

UN Women's Regional Director- Ms. Christine Musisi at the Market Place session. She emphasized the role of women in socio economic development in Africa. “For Africa to succeed, women must be brought to the center of Africa’s development. This Market Place offers a sustainable solution to South- South Corporation besides offering a platform for regional linkages”

UN Women's Country Director- Ms. Zebib Kavuma giving a key note speech at the opening session of the UN Women’s Market Place. She welcomed all delegates and exhibitors to the Market Place “More and more we are also facilitating and engaging in forums that bring together men and women to discuss issues that affect us all and find context specific solutions and especially highlighting the important role of men as change agents for gender equality and women’s empowerment.”
Christian Aid Malawi showcases an initiative at the Market Place; “This initiative delivers positive and sustainable change in the lives of 9000 Malawian small holder farmers through increasing productivity and incomes whilst creating an environment that promotes growth of pigeon peas value chain” Ms. Pansi Katenga, Country Manager- Christian Aid- Malawi

“TradeMark East Africa is addressing gender-based constraints that prevent women from participating in regional and international trade. We are have to be part of the Market Place which has offered great opportunities for networking and information sharing to also contribute to improving our interventions”

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