



Theory of Change Training

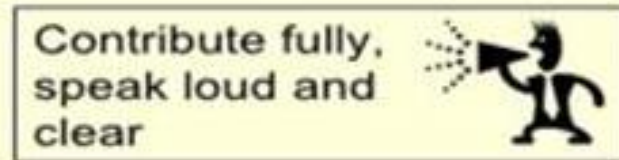
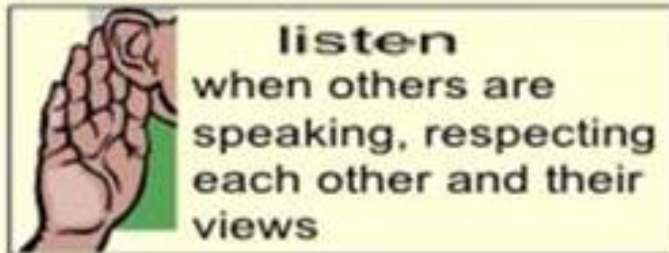
USAID/Jordan Monitoring & Evaluation Support Project

March, 2019

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Ground Rules

As a courtesy to your colleagues, please:



A stylized illustration featuring a red flag on a white pole, positioned atop a green mountain peak. The background is a solid light blue sky with two white, paper-cut style clouds. Below the main mountain, there are two smaller green mountain peaks. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

EXPECTATIONS & **GOALS**

Learning Objectives

- Increased understanding of the critical role of TOC as a planning and learning tool, how and when to use it
- Increased knowledge of TOC components and strengthened ability to develop a robust TOC
- Strengthened ability to lead and facilitate a TOC review process in an Activity setting

Overview - Day I

- TOC Overview
 - What is it?
 - How does it differ from logic models and development hypotheses?
 - Why do we need it?
- TOC Process
 - Framing the TOC process
 - How can we conduct a high quality TOC process and product?
- TOC Steps 1-4
 - 1-2: Problem and Context Analysis
 - 3: Identify the Goal
 - 4: Causal Outcomes Diagram

Theory of Change Tree



A Brief History

- Theory of Change is not new
 - Rooted in two streams of development: evaluation practice and informed social action
- Evaluation:
 - Aspect of program theory (1960s- present day)
 - Aspen Institute (U.S.): Convening of evaluators and community development practitioners to tackle evaluation of complex community initiatives (1990s-2005)
 - “The Community Builders’ Approach to Theory Development” (Anderson, 2005)
- Informed Action for Social Change
 - Social change and participatory schools of thought advocate for “conscious reflection on theories of development, as basis for social learning and action”

Vogel, Isabel, “Review of the use of ‘Theory of Change’ in international development,” UK Department of International Development, 2012.

What is a Theory of Change?



[Theory of Change Video]

Key Features of a Theory of Change

- An **approach** to the design of social programs, structured to clarify the causal logic and causal pathways by which change will occur
- **A process and a product**
- **Details ideas and beliefs about HOW and WHY change will happen**
 - From the perspective of the Activity, project, or organization
 - Based on existing evidence
 - Based on a deep understanding of the context and series of analyses
- Demonstrates/describes the pathways of change
 - Causal logic
 - Could be used to complete the sentence, “if we do X, then Y will change **because....**”
- Identifies assumptions behind the expected change
 - Programmatic assumptions (addressed by the project/Activity)
 - Contextual Assumptions (beyond the control of the project/Activity)
- **A process of critical questioning (evaluative thinking)**

Theory of Change Process

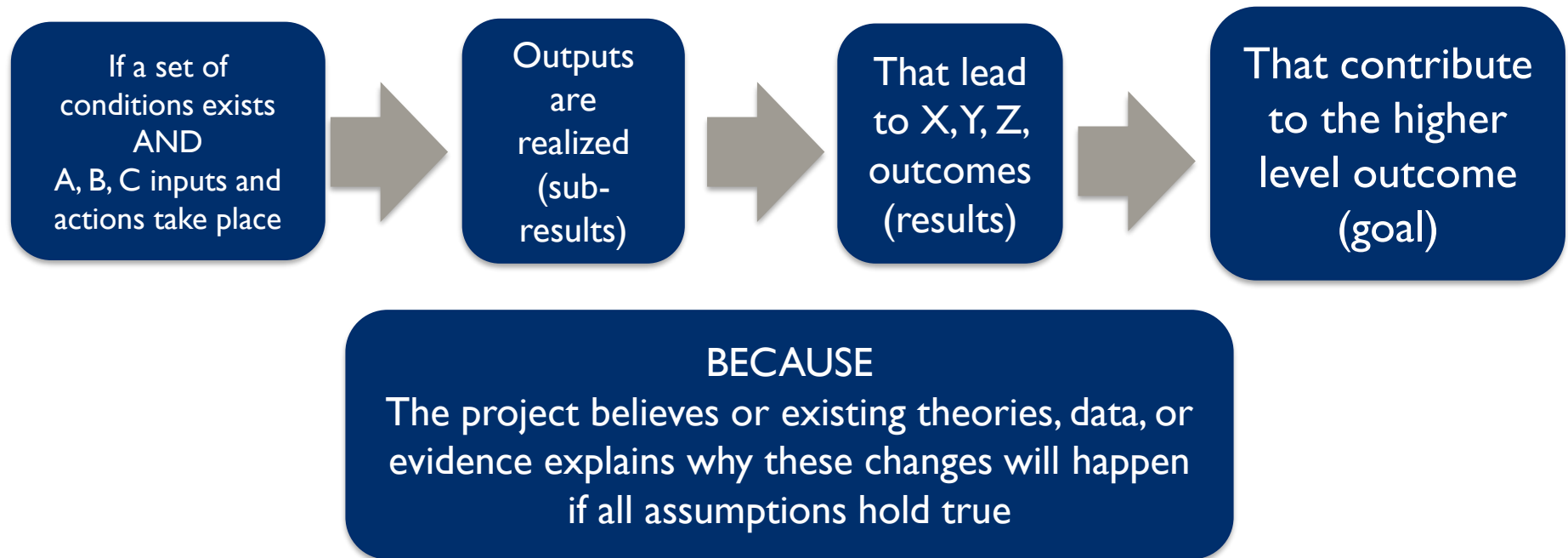
- A participatory process of critical questioning, intentional design
- Purpose driven
- Participation of a wide range of stakeholders (internal and/or external to the Activity or Project)
- Comprehensive Analysis
 - Stakeholder, Gender, Political Economy, Conflict, etc. analyses
- Articulate and challenge implicit and explicit assumptions
- Test hypotheses about how change will occur
- “Pause and Reflect”
 - On-going, iterative process of reflection
 - Update theory of change based on new evidence and experience (research, evaluations, monitoring data, learning, implementation experience)

Theory of Change Products

- Graphic or visual depiction
 - Captures the major aspects of discussions from the TOC process
 - Flexible with no particular format: can include cyclical processes, feedback loops, one result could lead to multiple other results, different shapes can be used, etc.
- Narrative description
 - Complements and describes the TOC visual and related discussions in more depth
 - No set length
 - Should adequately describe each result level, HOW and WHY change will occur, existing evidence supporting the causal logic or change pathway, to what extent change needs to happen at each level or how you will recognize change (indicators), programmatic and contextual assumptions (USAID/Jordan AMELP Template)
- **Never a finished product:** a starting point that reflects the team's best thinking at a moment in time; should be revisited and updated as needed (USAID How-To Note: Developing a Project Logic Model)

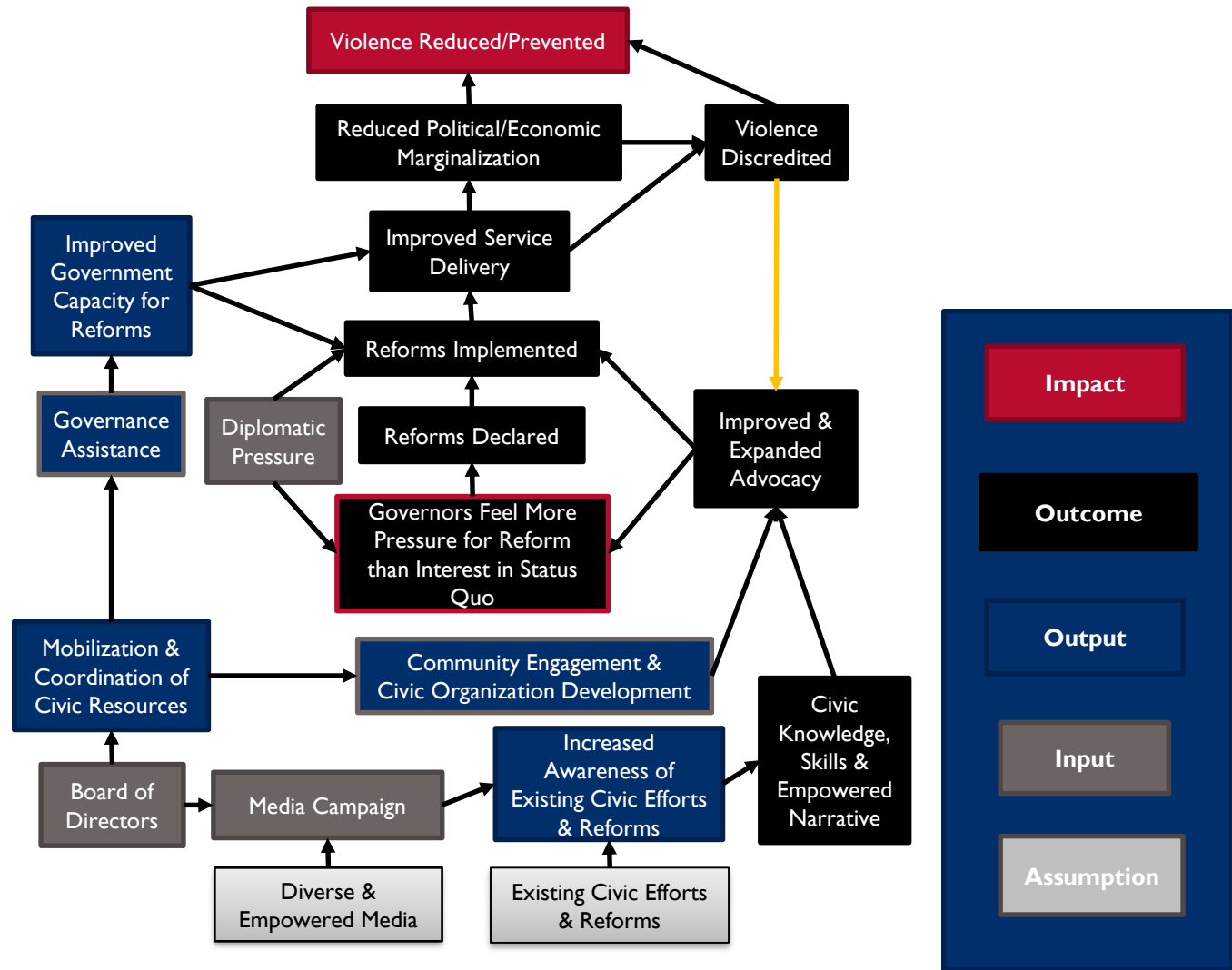
What is a Theory of Change?

Pathways of Change



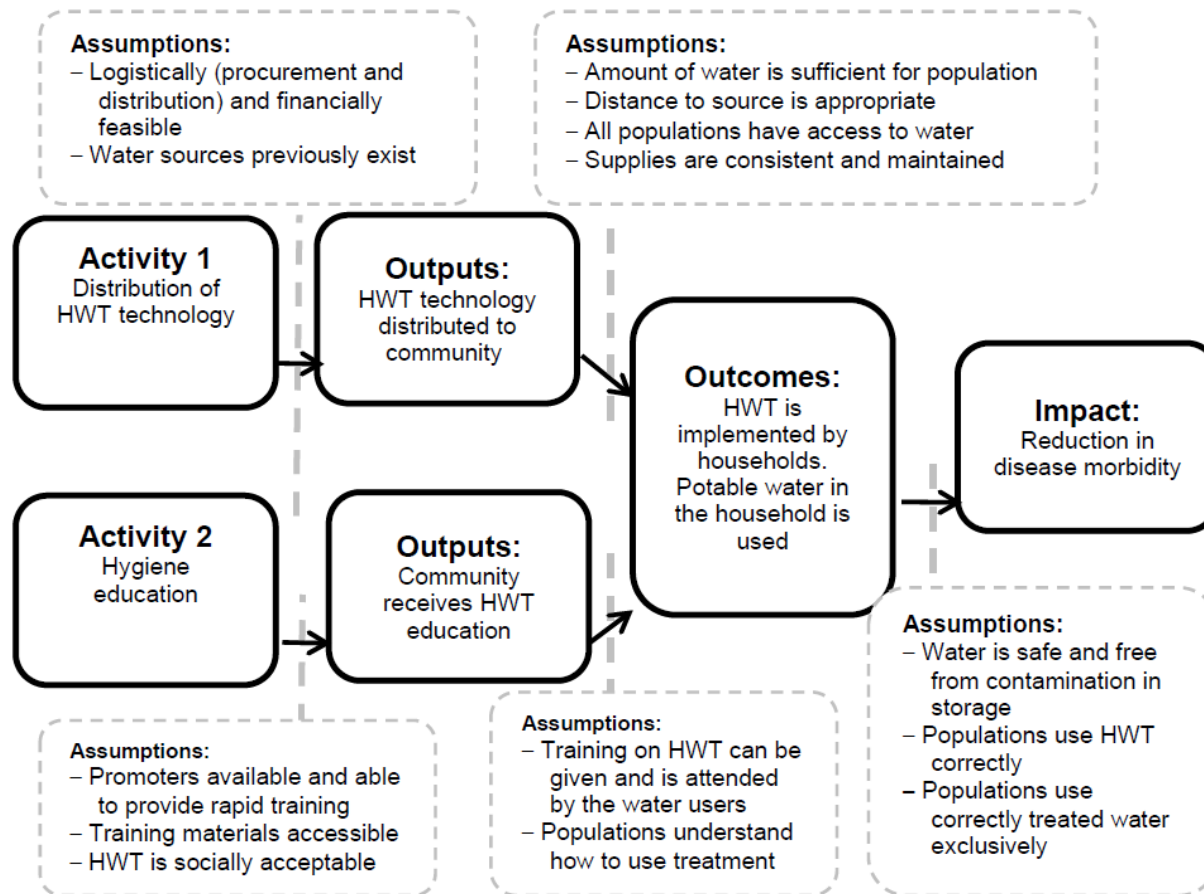
Adapted from: USAID Education in Crisis & Conflict Network,
https://eccnetwork.net/wp-content/uploads/12.16.A.TheoryofChange.Final_.pdf

Project or Activity Theory of Change



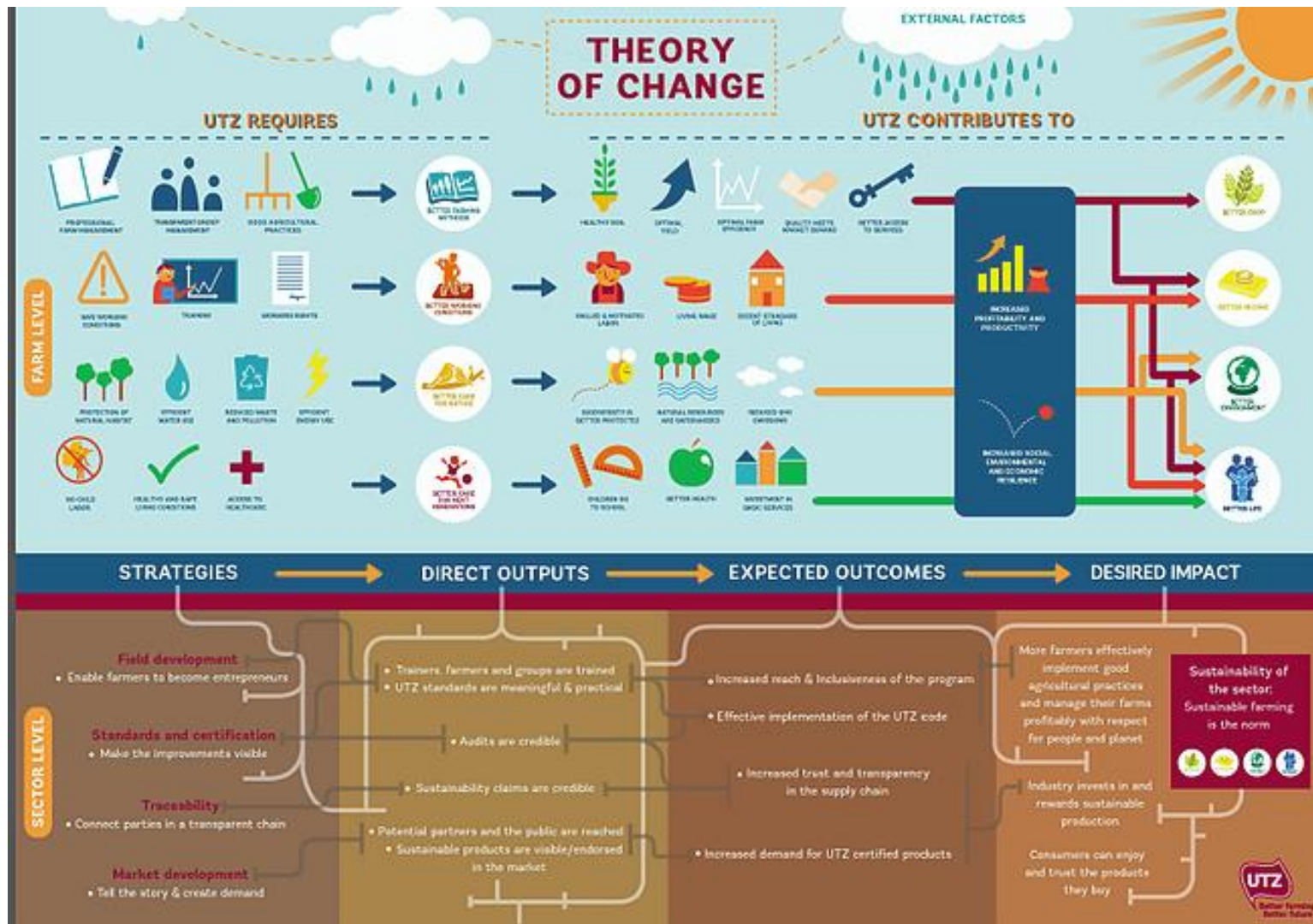
Emergency Response Theory of Change

Figure 2: Theory of change example – household water treatment (HWT) with hygiene education

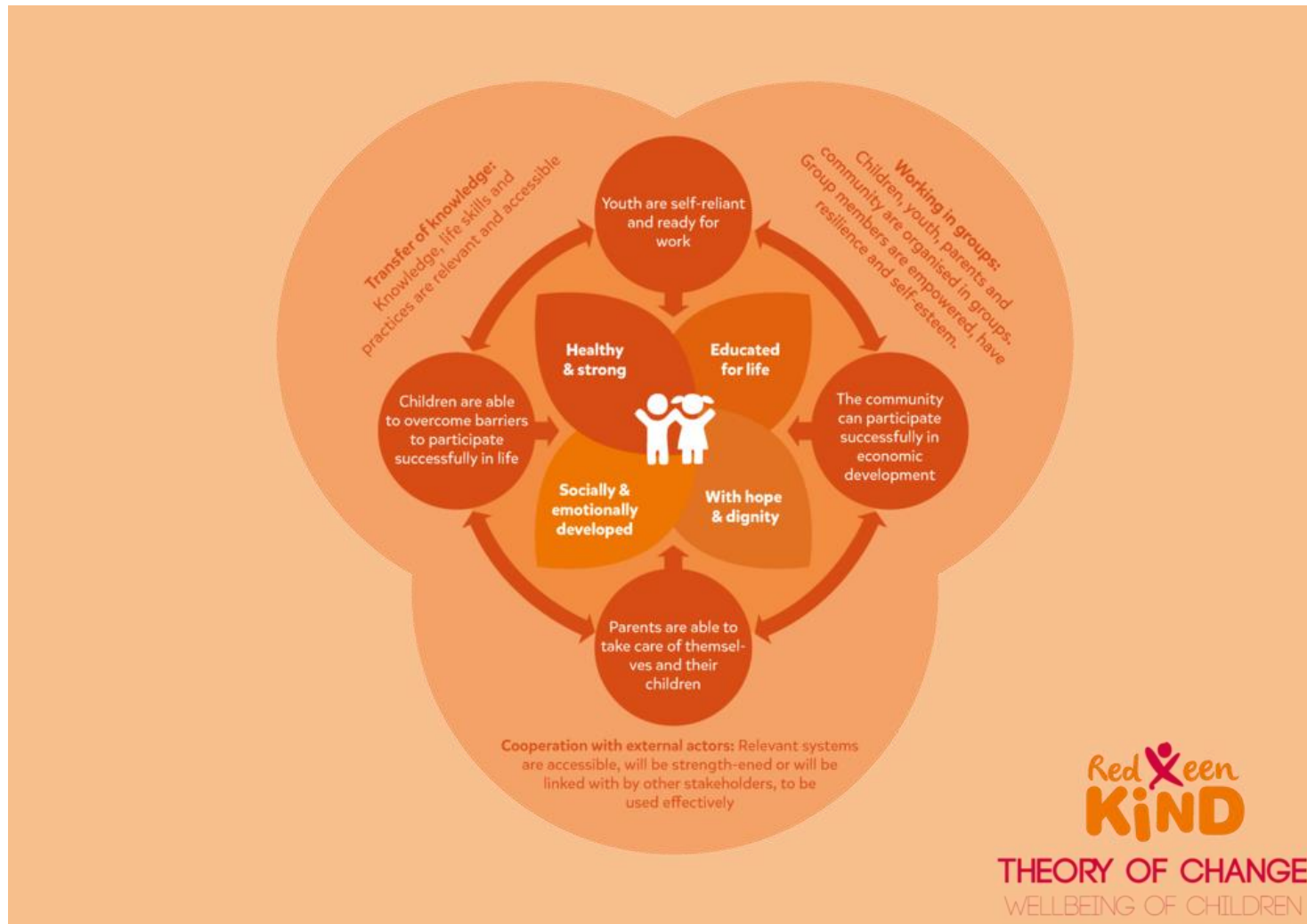


3ie, “Short-term WASH interventions in emergency responses in low- and middle-income countries: Systematic Review”, 2017, http://www.3ieimpact.org/media/filer_public/2017/03/01/srs8-short-term-wash.pdf.

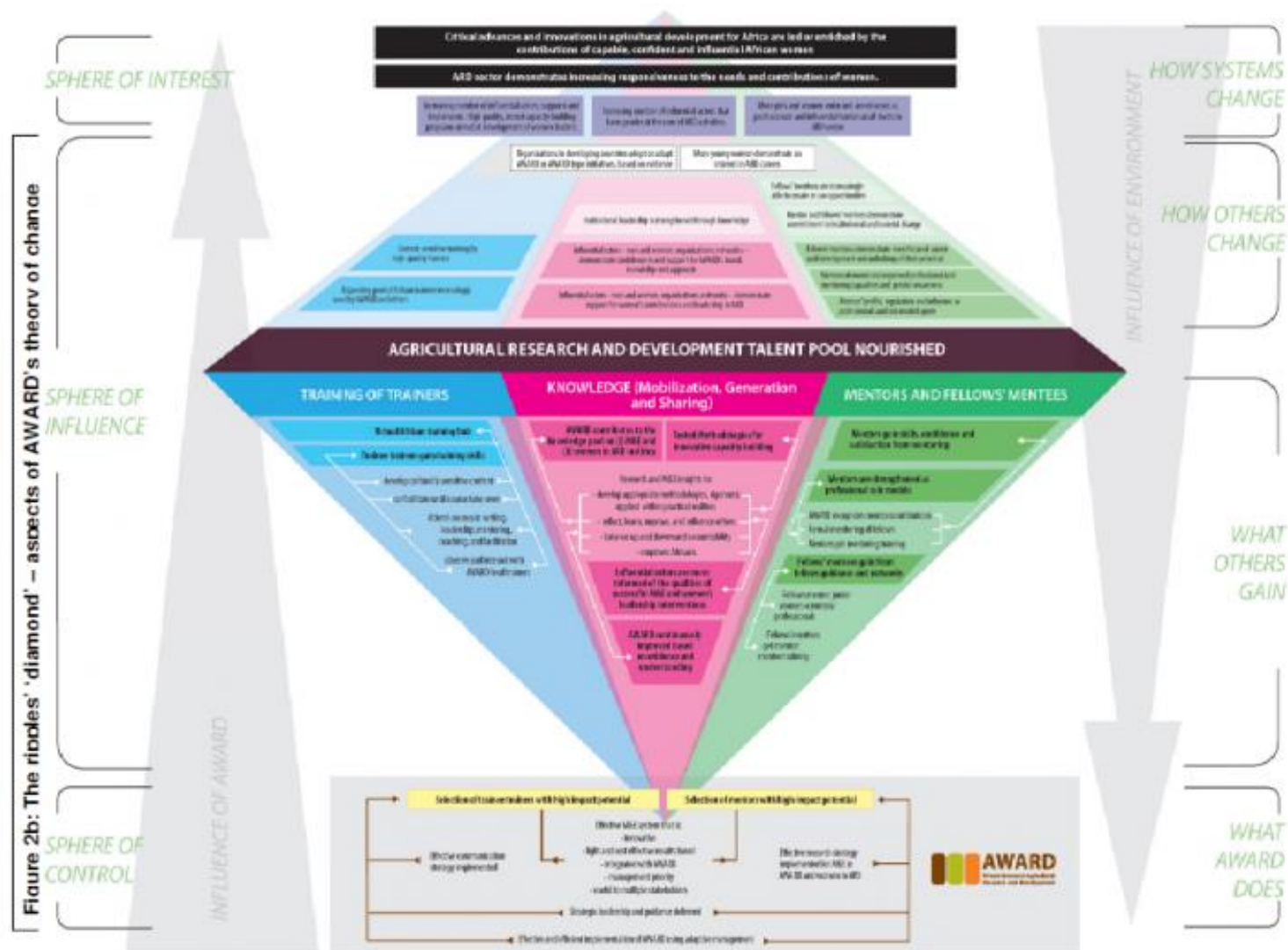
Organizational Theory of Change



Organizational Theory of Change



Program Theory of Change



TOC Narrative

- **A complement to the TOC visual**
- No set length
- Covers
 - The **context** in which the development problem is situated
 - Intended **results and sub-results**
 - **Description of HOW and WHY** change is expected to happen
 - Causal pathways leading to the desired change (in part, if-then statements can be used)
 - Evidence (as applicable) supporting hypothesized causal linkages
 - **Major interventions** that USAID and others will undertake to catalyze these outcomes
 - **Key assumptions** that underlie the success of this theory
 - **Key indicators** to monitor how progress unfolds during implementation

USAID/Jordan Activity MEL Plan Template, <https://jordankmportal.com/resources/activity-monitoring-and-evaluation-plan-template-amep>

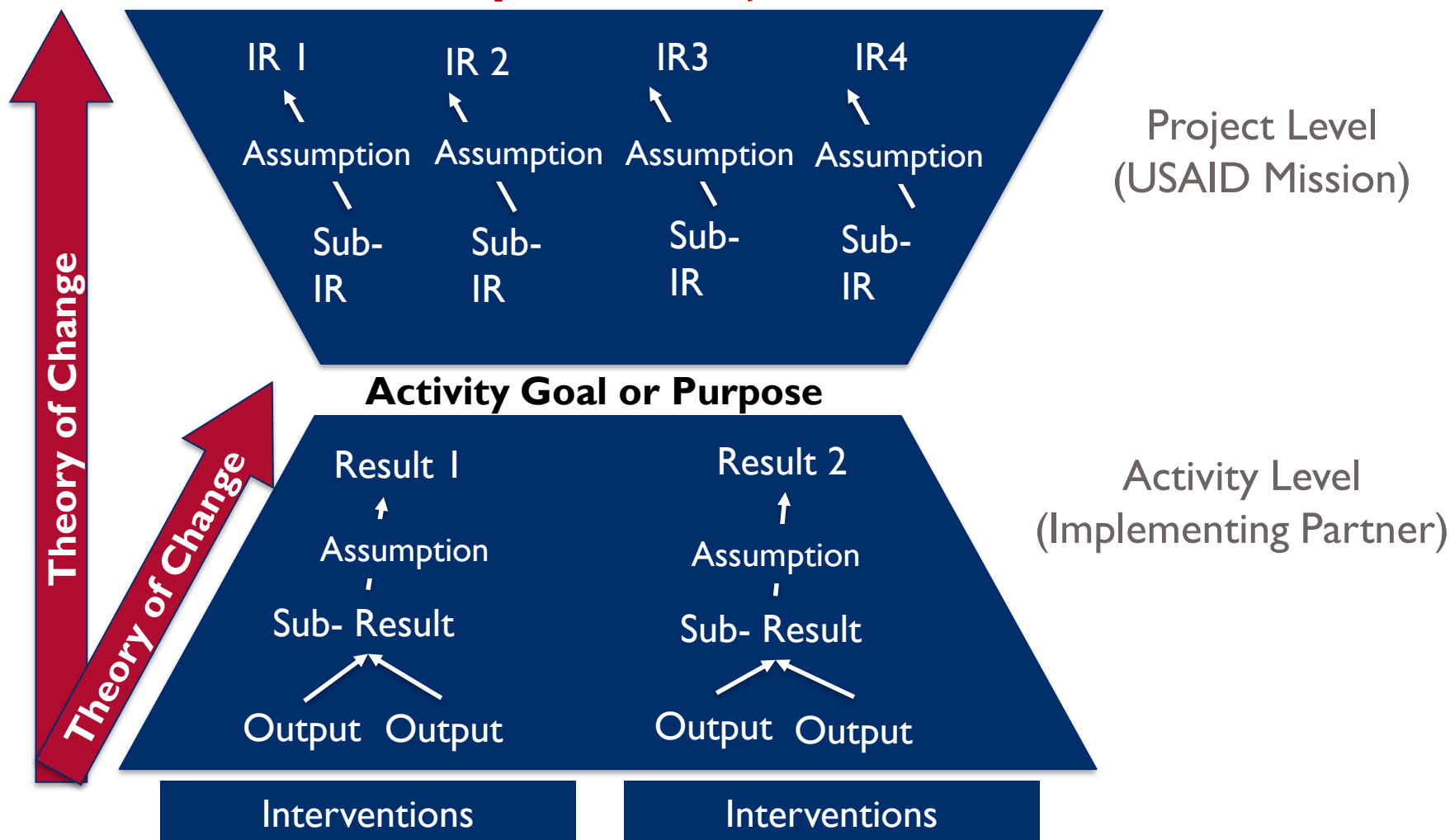
Theories of Change at Different Levels



TOCs in the Context of USAID

CDCS Goal Development Objective

USG/
USAID Mission Level



Theory of Change Across Contexts

Development

- Longer design/implementation period
 - Greater potential for time to develop, reflect upon, and revise during implementation
- Focus on longer-term outcomes
- Greater potential to integrate existing evidence, deeper analyses of needs, stakeholder priorities/perceptions, etc.
- TOC utilized to varying degrees

Humanitarian

- Short-term design and implementation period
- Often short time frames for reflection and revision
- Possible limited access to information/ communities
- Context, pathways of change, and assumptions behind TOC may change rapidly
- TOC is often underutilized

Basis for evaluations: lays out a testable hypothesis

What is the difference?

- TOC and Development Hypothesis?
- TOC and Logic Model?



What's the Difference?

- **Development Hypothesis**
 - A synonym for theory of change
 - In practice, a short statement of the main hypothesis that underpins the theory of change
 - **DOES NOT** often capture: complexity of change, multiple change pathways, interaction between expected results, assumptions, evidence supporting the hypothesis

USAID ADS 201: Describes the theory of change, logic, and relationships between the building blocks needed to achieve or contribute to a long-term result. It is a short narrative that explains the relationships between results upwards from the sub-IRs, to the IRs, to the DOs.

"If youth skills in service delivery are improved through the VTC foundational training and if youth complete the on-the-job training then youth employment in the QSR sector will be improved." –Youth With Potential

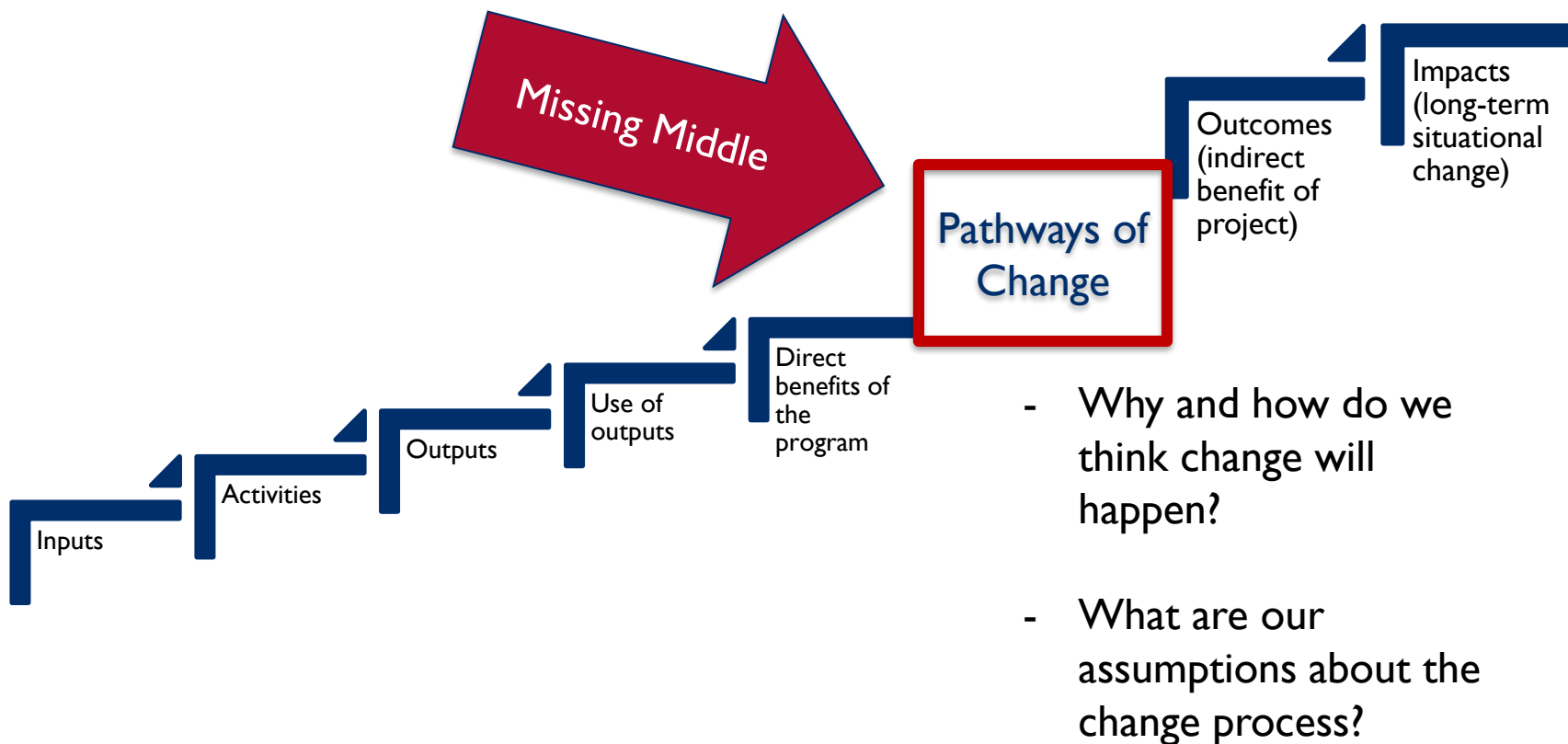
What's the Difference?

USAID ADS 201: A logic model is a graphic or visual depiction of a theory of change

Theory of Change	Logic Model
Maps out the change process	Maps out an intervention within a change process
Critical thinking , room for complexity and deep questioning	Linear representation of change , simplifies reality (snapshot of a TOC)
Explanatory : articulates and explains the what, how, and why of an intended change process, and the contribution of the initiative	Descriptive: states only what is thought will happen/'will' be achieved.
Pathways of change, 'unlimited' and parallel result chains or webs, feedback mechanisms	Three results levels (output, outcome, impact) (result, sub-result, sub-sub result)
Ample attention for the plausibility of assumed causal relations	Suggests causal relations between results levels without analysing and explaining these
Articulates assumptions underlying the strategic thinking of the design of a policy, programme or project	Focuses on assumptions about external conditions

Adapted from: HiVOS http://www.theoryofchange.nl/sites/default/files/resource/hivos_toc_guidelines_final_nov_2015.pdf

The “Missing Middle” of Logic Models



Adapted from Vogel, 2012

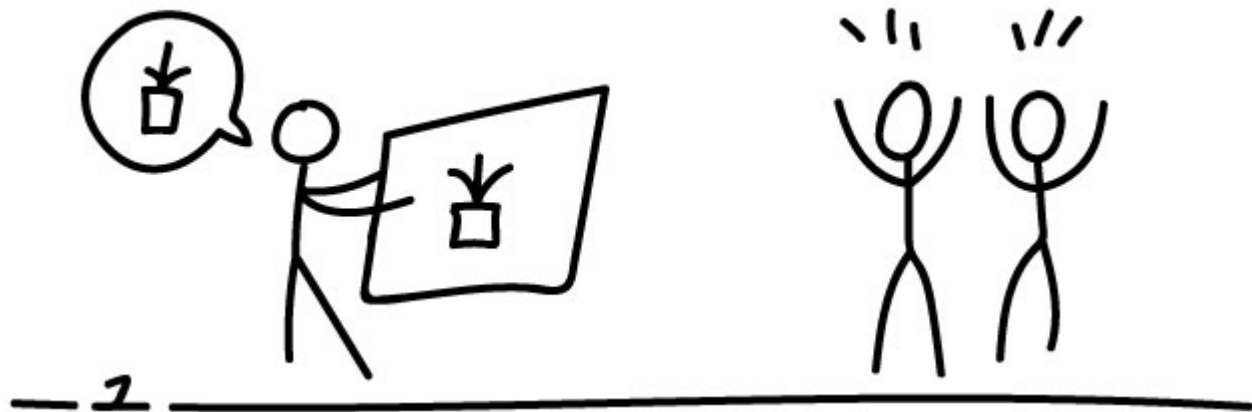
Why Have Both?

“The **theory of change** explains how you see **the world**, and how change happens and how you are going to intervene based on that understanding. The **log-frame** then becomes a **management and measurement tool** for making resource decisions. It is good for defining success but not for defining reality.”

-Julian Barr (Vogel, 2012)

Draw It!

- What is a:
 - Development Hypothesis
 - Theory of Change
 - Logic Model



Why Develop a Theory of Change?

- Clarify intent: establish a common understanding about a project/Activity and its goals, strategic choices and core values
- Ensure planning is done with “end in mind”
 - Avoid “project-itis”!
- Lead to more realistic objectives and appropriate strategies
- Make implicit assumptions about change explicit
 - Identify why an Activity/Project may not have achieved the intended change
 - Example: Kosovo projects/Activities
- Provides a programmatic road map

Why Develop a Theory of Change?

- Provide an opportunity to engage stakeholders
- Lay a foundation for more consistent program implementation
 - Promote a shared buy-in around goals and approaches
- Strengthen evaluative thinking (critical questioning)
- Guide monitoring and evaluation efforts
 - Identify most useful indicators
 - Lay out a testable hypothesis of change
- Communication tool to provide a snapshot of what the project is about

USAID ADS 201: Theories of Change are “not intended to define a rigid implementation plan, but to provide an organizing framework that should be updated as new evidence emerges, circumstances change, and tactics require adjustments.”

THEORIES OF CHANGE ARE INTENDED TO BE HELPFUL AND PRACTICAL!



What does the Evidence Say?

- TOCs can support and improve projects/Activities when:
 - **High quality TOC process** is implemented
 - **Assumptions are made explicit**
 - Strategic thinking is realistic and transparent
 - Adequate time and resources are invested in the process
 - **Evaluative thinking** (critical questioning) is embraced
 - Multiple pathways for change are identified, rather than just one
 - **TOCs are utilized** to adapt and improve projects/activities during implementation
 - Utilized as a guide, not a rigid predictions of change
 - **Donors are able to support adaptation** during implementation

Theory of Change Process



Preparation for TOC Process

- Why are we doing this?
- What is the intended product of this process?

Purpose	Description
Project/Activity design	Comprehensive, all TOC steps.
Strategy revision	Revisit TOC to review strategies in response to changes inside and outside the project, new insights, and evidence
Quality review of existing project/Activity	Improve program quality, revisit assumptions, make implicit assumptions explicit, sharpen strategies
Strategic learning or “pause and reflect” moment	Define or review learning questions; build evidence base around current strategies, support adaptive management
Evaluation	Examine effectiveness; Mid-term, end-term, or ex-post; often reconstructs TOC
Scaling up or out	Analysis of suitability and feasibility of scaling up or out a project, need for adaptation of the TOC; review and test assumptions in the new context
Collaborative and collective MEL in a multi-actor initiative	Develop joint strategic approach and collective MEL framework and learning agenda, with clear and agreed roles and responsibilities of each actor involved

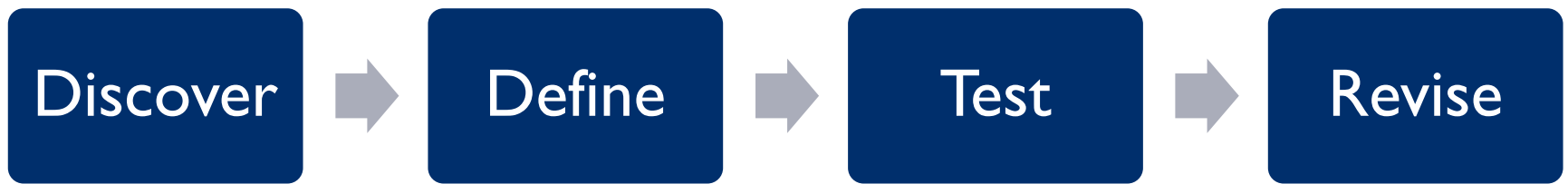
Adapted from HiVOS

TOC Process – Success Factors

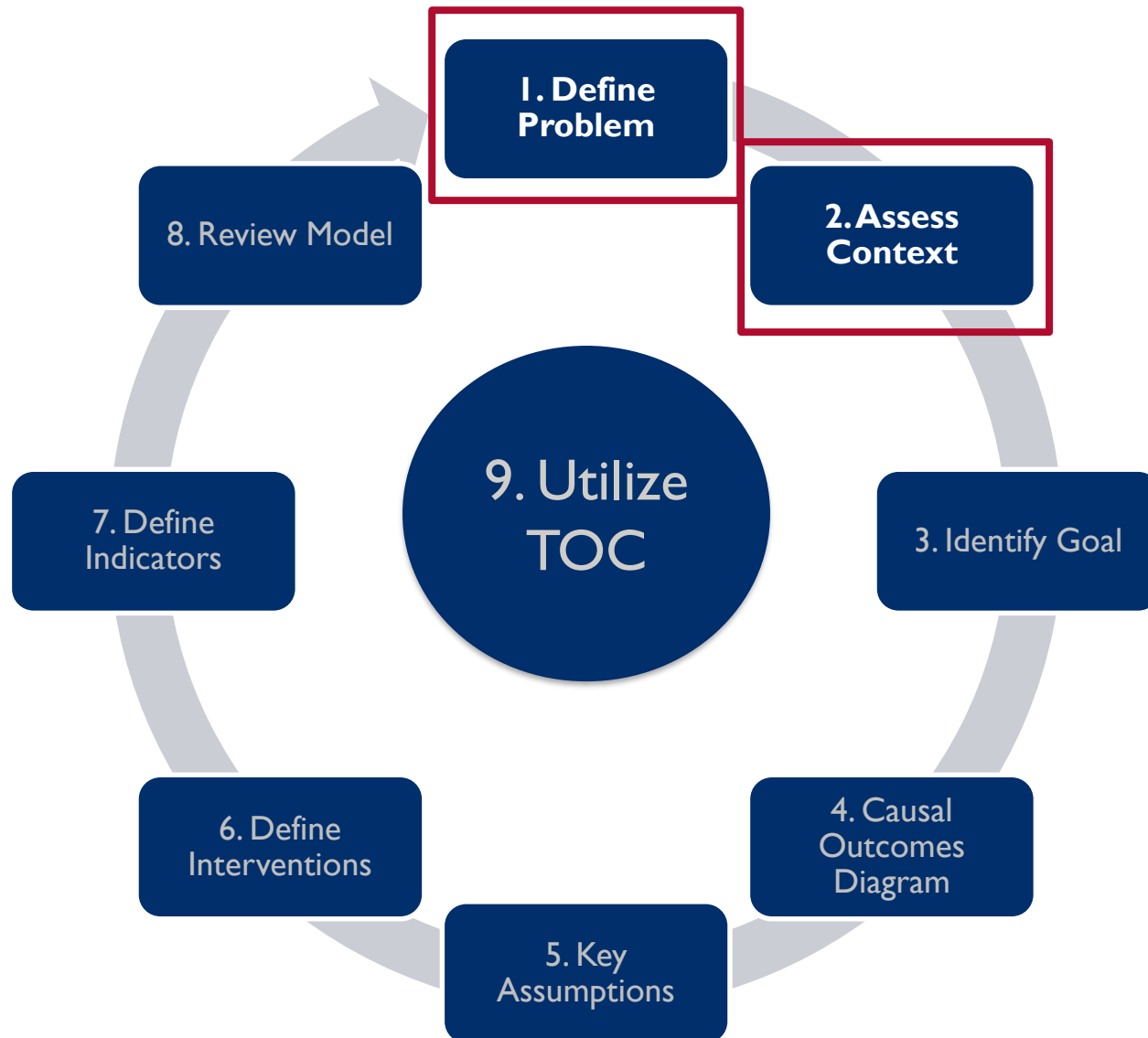
- **Useful, ownership, clarity** (Vogel, 2012)
- Inclusive and participatory
 - Involves technical staff, M&E, leadership, and other relevant external stakeholders
 - Shared ownership of the process and product
- Purpose-driven
 - TOC process purpose is well-defined and understood by participants
- Discussion-based
- Open environment to encourage people to freely voice their assumptions
- Grounded in context
- Evaluative/theory of change thinking effectively integrated and encouraged

Approach to Theories of Change

- **TOCs are models to be tested**
 - TOCs are built on our knowledge, beliefs, evidence and assumptions about how change happens
 - **Change can be approached in many ways – there may be multiple effective models**
 - All models have limitations and may not accurately reflect all the nuances of a system in reality
- TOC Testing occurs during implementation and requires regular reflection, review, and revision



Theory of Change Process



Step 1: Define the Problem

- Identify the core problem
- Explore issues that the exist within the parameters of the project/Activity interest area and work backward to identify the core problem
- Throughout the process, ask: “What causes that?”
- There is often more than one cause to a problem
- TOC Pause & Reflect Sessions/Reviews: review and validate core problem

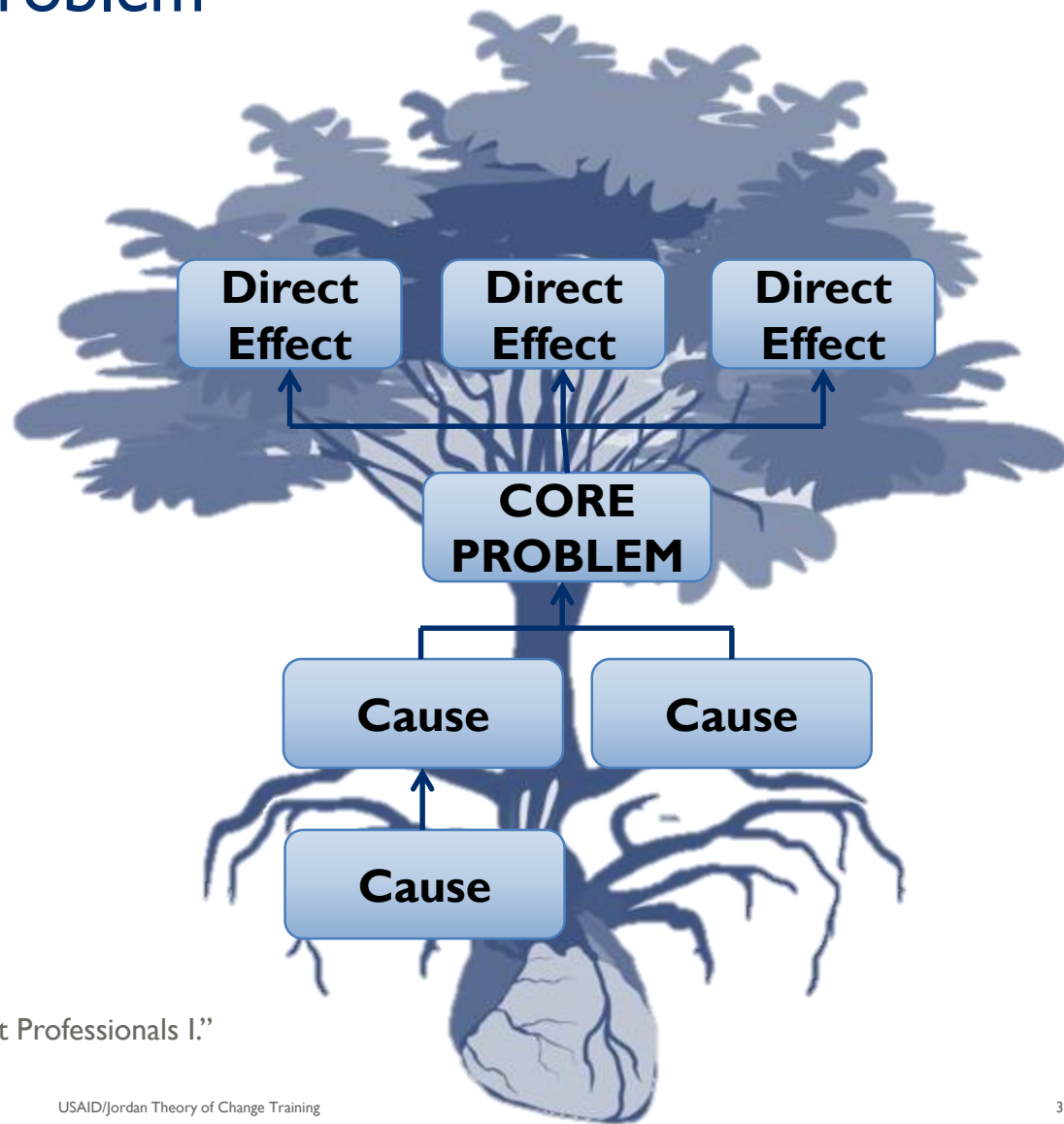


Image: Lingos, “Project Management for Development Professionals I.”

Step 2: Assess the Context

- The anchor upon which the theory of change is built
- Examine root causes of the core problem and circumstances or conditions that may affect the situation, root causes, and core problem
- **Review the evidence!**
 - Evaluations
 - Monitoring Data
 - Research and other studies
 - What is new since the project/Activity was designed?
- Consider the whole system in which the core problem exists
- Proposal vs. Implementation Start-up Phases
 - Short proposal time periods limit the level of data collection
 - Implementation period often requires an update/more in-depth analysis of the context

Context Analysis Tools

- Context Analysis: Social, political, economic, ecological, other dimensions
 - Problem tree, fish bone analysis, situation models, force field analyses, 5Rs approach
- Stakeholder and actor analysis
- Political Economy Analysis
- Behavior Change Barrier Analysis
- Power and gender dynamics, drivers of change, opportunities for change



Gaps in Knowledge and Data

- There will always be gaps in data
- Identify and document gaps in knowledge
 - Discuss during TOC process, especially steps 4: Causal Logic Diagram and 5: Assumptions
 - Prioritize gaps
 - Integrate into learning questions, and baseline assessment or other data collection exercises

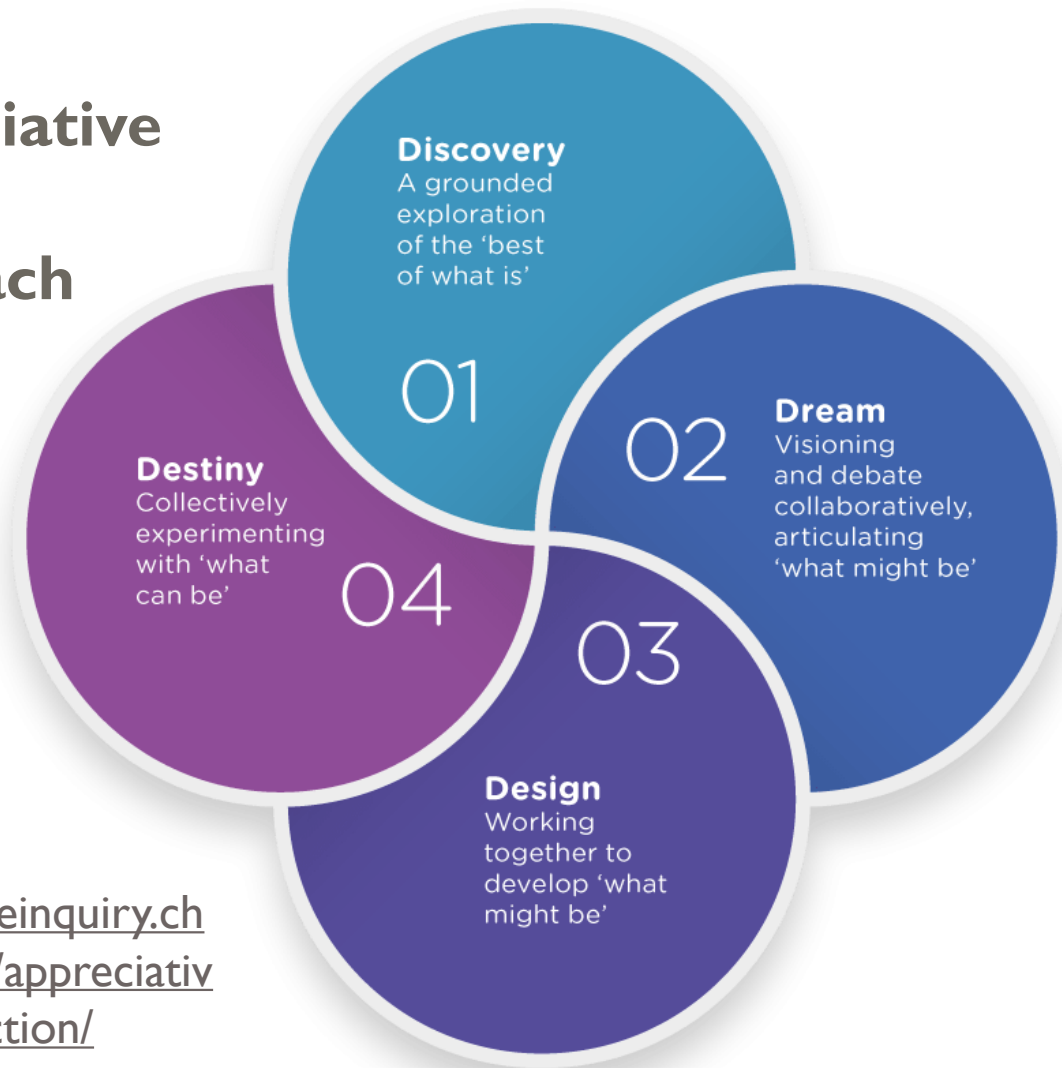


Problem & Context Analysis: Success Factors

- Plan sufficient time for data collection and analysis
- Consult stakeholders
 - integrate stakeholder perceptions and local knowledge
- Integrate gender, social inclusion, and power dynamics
- Triangulate data sources
- Be as thorough as possible within time constraints
- Document the unknowns
- Plan for utilization

Alternative Approach

Appreciative Inquiry Approach

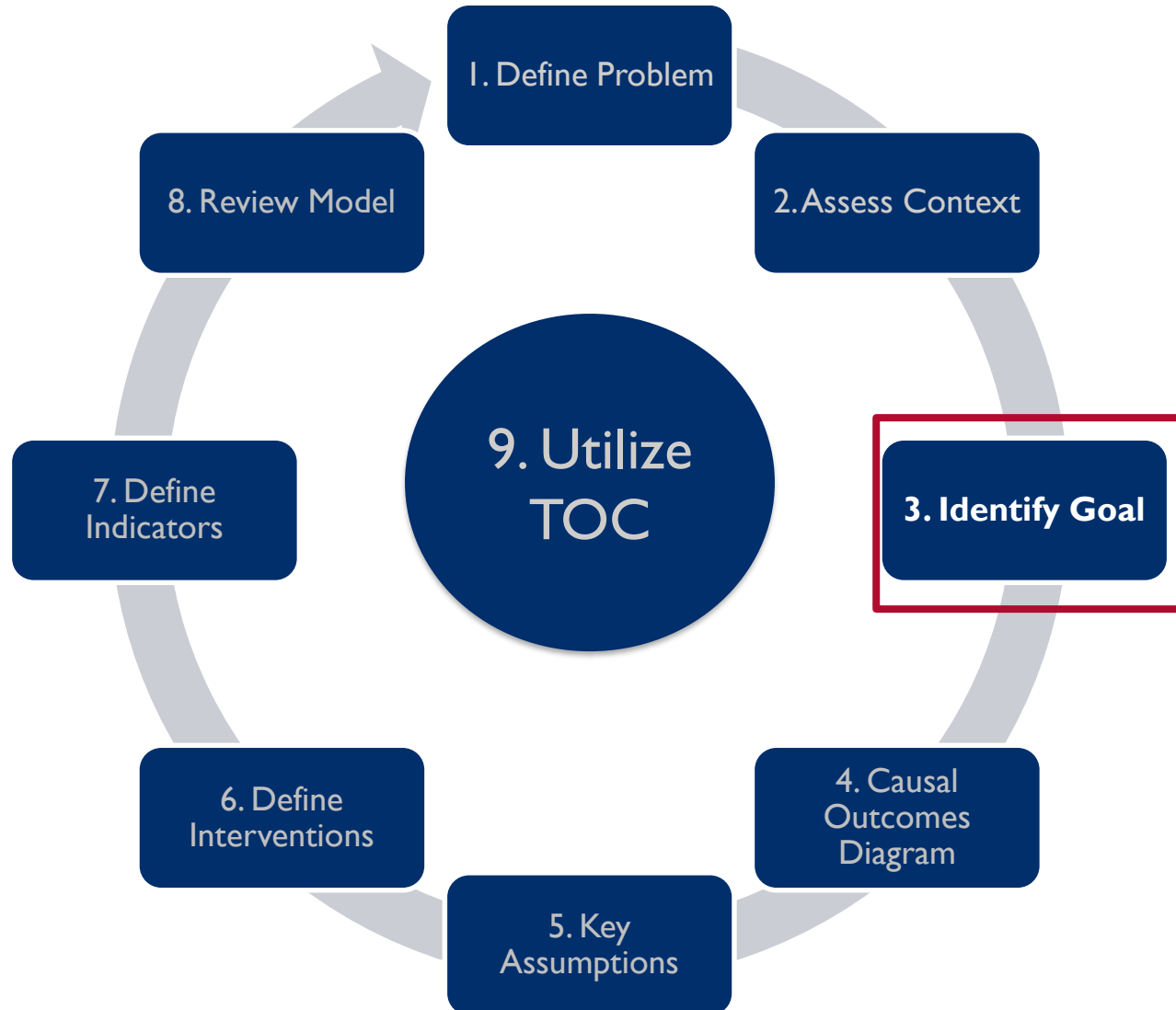


<https://appreciativeinquiry.champlain.edu/learn/appreciative-inquiry-introduction/>

Group Exercise: Problem & Context Analysis

- Scenario: USAID wants to think outside the box and has begun a competition to get new Activity ideas to tackle social issues in Jordan. Total value for each Activity is \$3 million over 3-5 years.
- Instructions:
 - Form groups (3-4 people)
 - Decide on an issue you think will be important to USAID to address that all group members know well
 - Create a problem tree
 - Identify what tools you would use to analyze the context
- Time: 30 Minutes

Theory of Change Process



Step 3: Identify the Goal/Purpose



Step 3: Identify the Goal/Purpose

- Convert the problem statement into a goal
- What is the highest level desired change, why and for whom?
 - **Describes what, who, where, NOT HOW!**
 - Should be ambitious but achievable in the strategy, project, and/or activity timeframe
- TOC Review:
 - Review and validate the project purpose: In the current situation, is the project purpose still valid?
 - Does existing evidence support the need to continue focusing on this problem/purpose as originally envisioned?
 - Does the project or Activity purpose need to be refined further?

Good Example:

Increased utilization of family planning and reproductive health services in Amman Governorate

Well-designed results statements are...

Statements of results, not processes:

What will have been achieved, not what processes will be undertaken or completed.

NOT THIS:

- Promote the adoption of new workplace safety laws.

BUT THIS:

- New workplace safety laws adopted

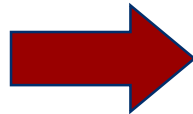
We frame them as “Done Deals” to help envision what success will look like, to focus on the result more than the process.

This also helps set us up to select appropriate measures.

Activities & Processes vs. Results

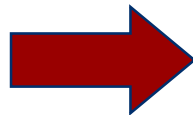
- Beware of confusing interventions with their desired end-result

Training



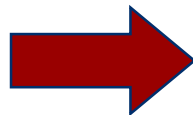
Increased skills

**Institutional
development**



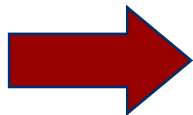
Improved services

**Dissemination
of information**

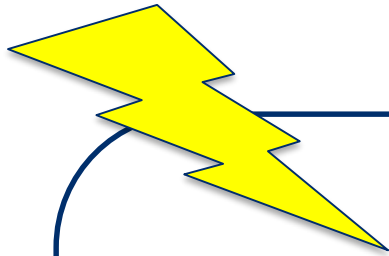


**Better informed
target group**

**Expert
technical
assistance**



**Improved policy
and regulatory
framework**



Do not be satisfied with vague and general goals

Describe the change specifically, and in terms of specific populations. A goal statement must be written in the form of an outcome: a changed situation that can be described and measured.

Group Discussion – Good or Poor Examples?

- To improve food security, income, and resilience for chronically food insecure rural women through their social and economic empowerment
- Increase use and continuation of family planning and reproductive health services in Jordan
- To improve local facilities and to empower and engage 10,300 targeted households in agricultural productivity, income and employment towards improving their basic food needs Ma'an and Karak Governorates.
- Underprivileged youth employment in service delivery sector improved

Group Exercise – Desired Change

Projects and Activities are living things – they are born, they grow, they work and they die.

Now ask yourself :

- If you read this on a gravestone, would you stop and want to know more?
- Is it powerful and snappy enough to be on grave stone ?
- Dose it really say what you'd like to be remembered for ?

Remember: It should be a very brief statement that capture as briefly as possible the difference they have made in the world

What would you like the world to remember you for?



Group Exercise – Goal Statement

What would success look like for your proposed project?

Lets move from the epitaph to a fuller description of a vision of success:

- Time horizon: 3-5 years
- What would success look like at the end of 3-5 years?

What are SMART Goals ?

Specific	Goal should be specific, why funds are required and how it will be utilized
Measurable	Exact Amount estimated for meeting the Goal should be stated
Attainable	Determine how it can be reached, and ability of individual to meet the outcome
Relevant	Is the Goal realistic and in line with the stated objectives of the individual
Time Bound	Specifically state when the goal needs to be reached

Theory of Change Process



How Change Happens

- Critical Aspects
 - Systems
 - Power
 - Norms
- Who creates change?
 - Change Actors
 - Institutions



Step 4: Develop a Causal Outcomes Diagram

Identify Domains of Change (IRs or Results)

Goal: Under-privileged youth employment in service delivery sector improved

Ind- G I: Number of individuals with new or better employment following completion of USG-assisted workforce development programs (EG. 6-I)

**Domain
of
Change**



RI: Youth vocational skills in service delivery improved

I.1: Percentage of targeted at-risk youth reporting preparedness to enter higher education, vocational training and/or the workforce due to USG assistance (3.c)

I.2: Number of youth successfully completing the foundation period with VTC

I.3: Number of youth successfully recruited in the Youth with Potential program

Sub RI: Awareness of QSR vocational training opportunities increased

Indicator I.1.1: Number of eligible youth that applied to the Youth with Potential program

Identifying Domains of Change (IRs, Results)

- Key Questions:
 - Who and what needs to change in order to achieve the goal?
 - Where does the change need to happen and in which way for the change to become possible?
 - Who needs to do what differently?
- Convert key root problems to domains of change

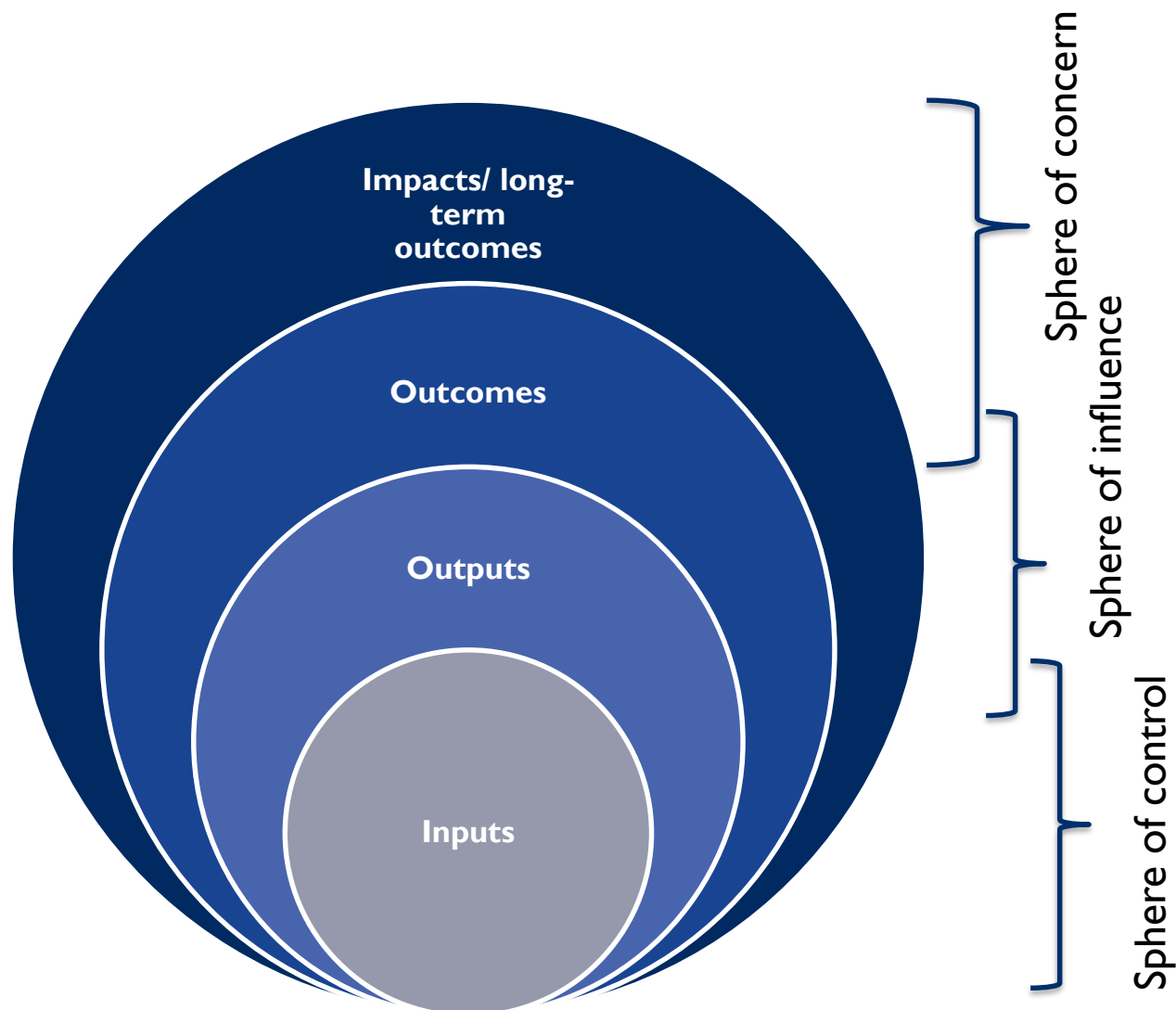
Example		
Key problems	converted to...	Domain of change
Limited ability to recover from shock		Improved ability to recover from shock
Low crop production		Increased crop production
Inequitable and limited income		Increased equitable income.

(Starr and Fornoff, 2016)

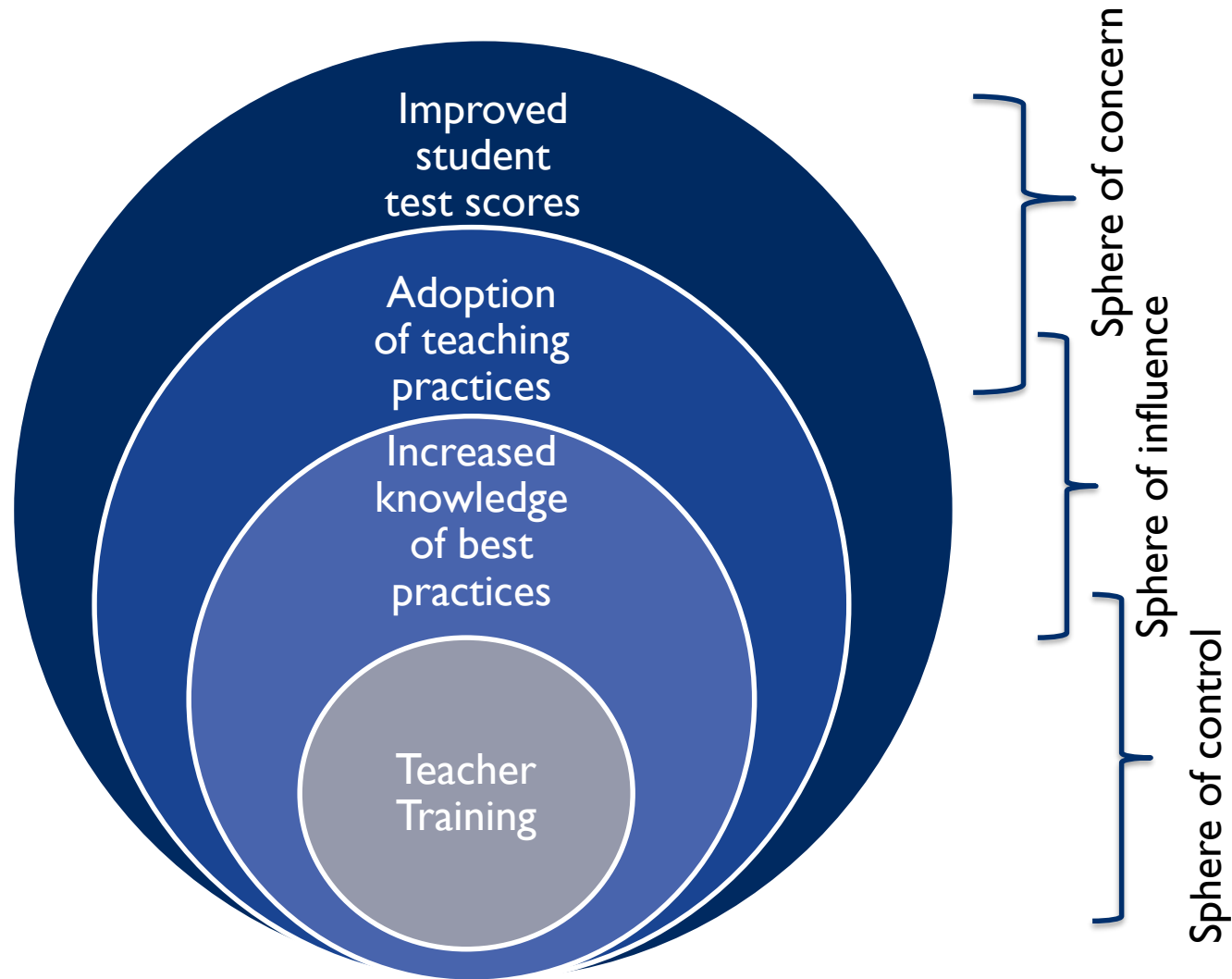
Prioritizing Domains of Change

- **Is there opportunity?**
- **Is it feasible?**
- **Are there potential partnerships?**
- **Do we have a comparative advantage or can add value in this area?**

Limits to Influence



Limits to Influence



Group Work – Domains of Change

- Determine the key domains of change (result) for your selected Activity
- Select no more than 3 domains of change
- Time: 15 minutes

Step 4: Develop a Causal Outcomes Diagram

Detail Full Causal Logic Chain

- Map pathways of change
 - sequence in which outcomes are expected to occur in order to accomplish the domain of change and ultimately reach the project goal
 - outcomes on lower levels are preconditions for outcomes at the next higher level
- The step-by-step solutions that make up pathways of change are interchangeably referred to as *outcomes, results, accomplishments, or preconditions*.
- Work backwards from the goal (the long-term change envisaged)
 - What needs to happen for the desired change to occur?
 - What needs to be in place for the desired change to occur?
 - How do we think the change process may evolve over time?
- USAID Terminology: IR, Sub-IRs (USAID), Results and Sub-results

Hypotheses and Logical Chains

Projects and Activities are Based on Hypotheses

Almost every project design contains definite ideas about **causal** relationships

If A, then B

- *IF we train teachers, THEN children will learn more*
- *IF we vaccinate children, THEN there will be fewer deaths*
- *IF we monitor elections, THEN there will be fewer irregularities*

A Logic Model Shows Why and How

Why?

IF...Then

Highest Level Impact

Broader Results

Initial Results

Outputs

Activities

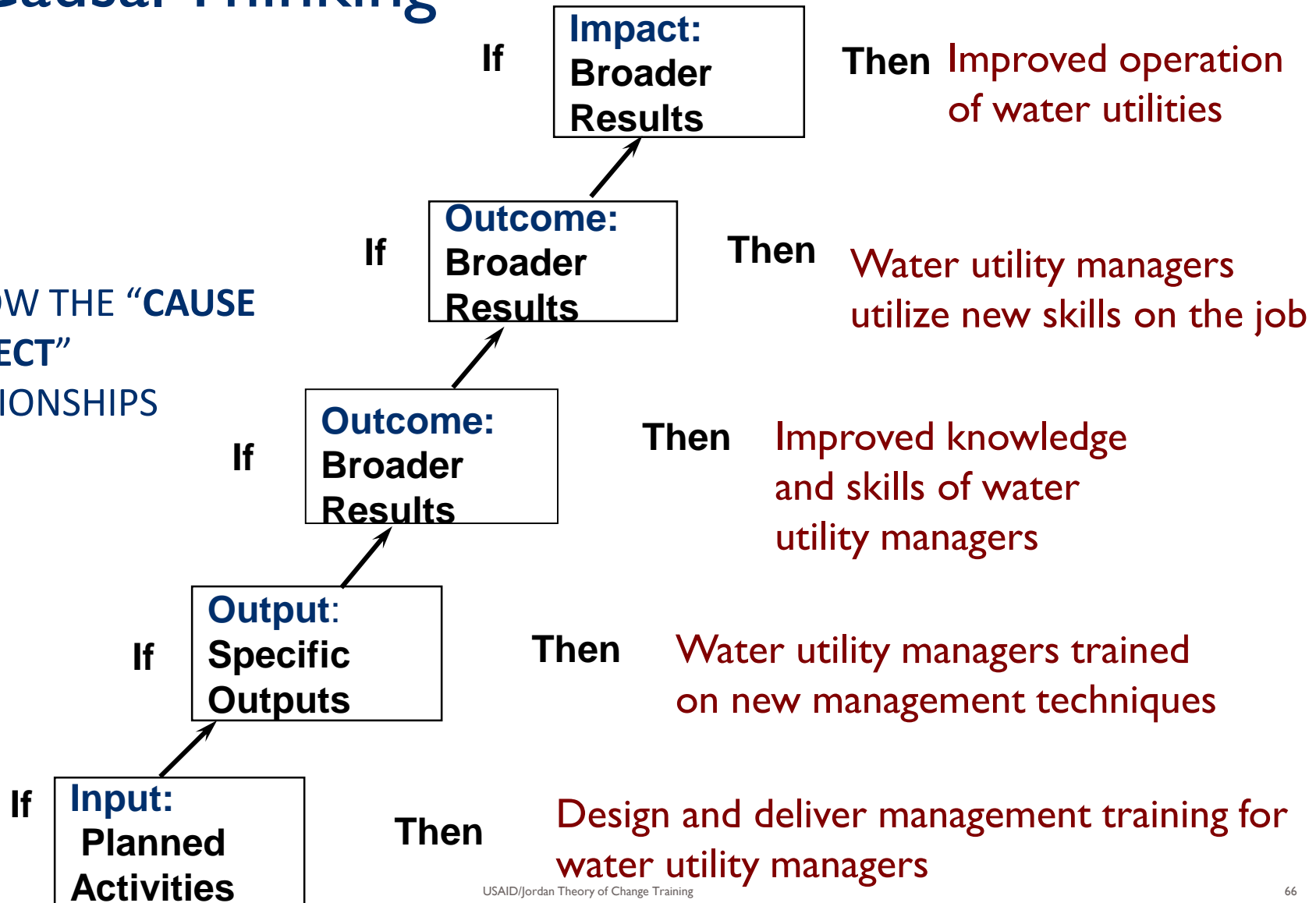
IF...Then

IF...Then

How?

Causal Thinking

FOLLOW THE “CAUSE
& EFFECT”
RELATIONSHIPS



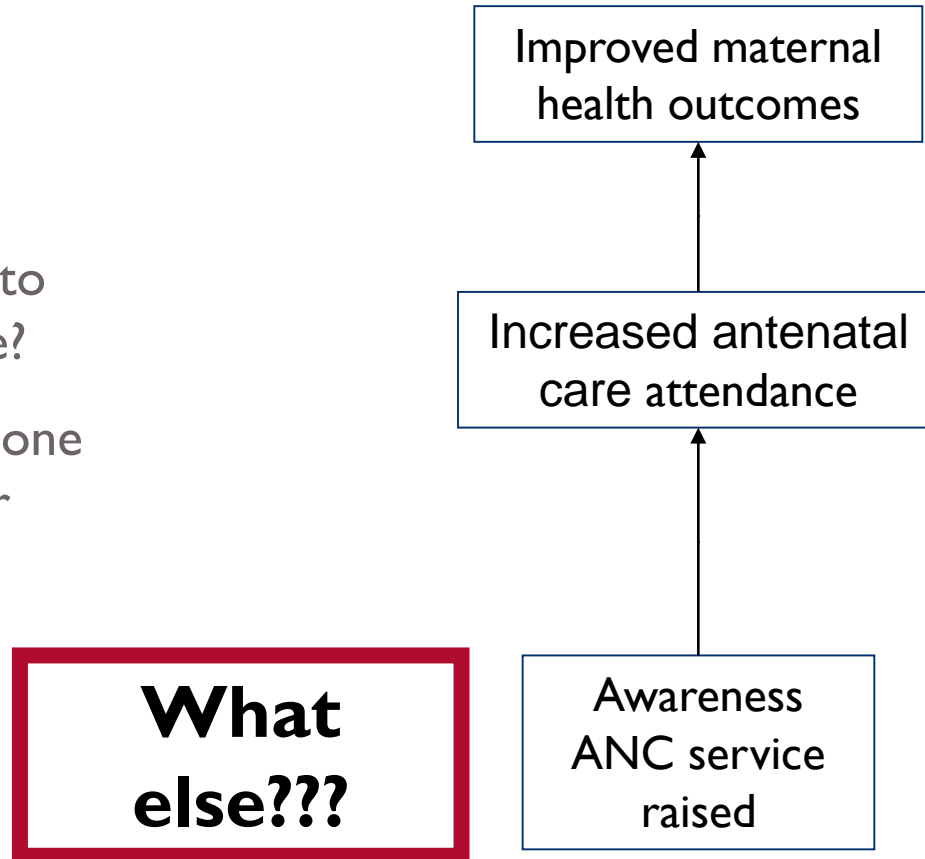
Common Causal Logic Pitfalls

- Large “causal gaps” from one level in the causal hierarchy to the next
- Results are not necessary AND sufficient for change to occur
- Multi-level results
- Multi-dimensional results
- Categorical or definitional linkages between results at different levels
- Chronological linkages

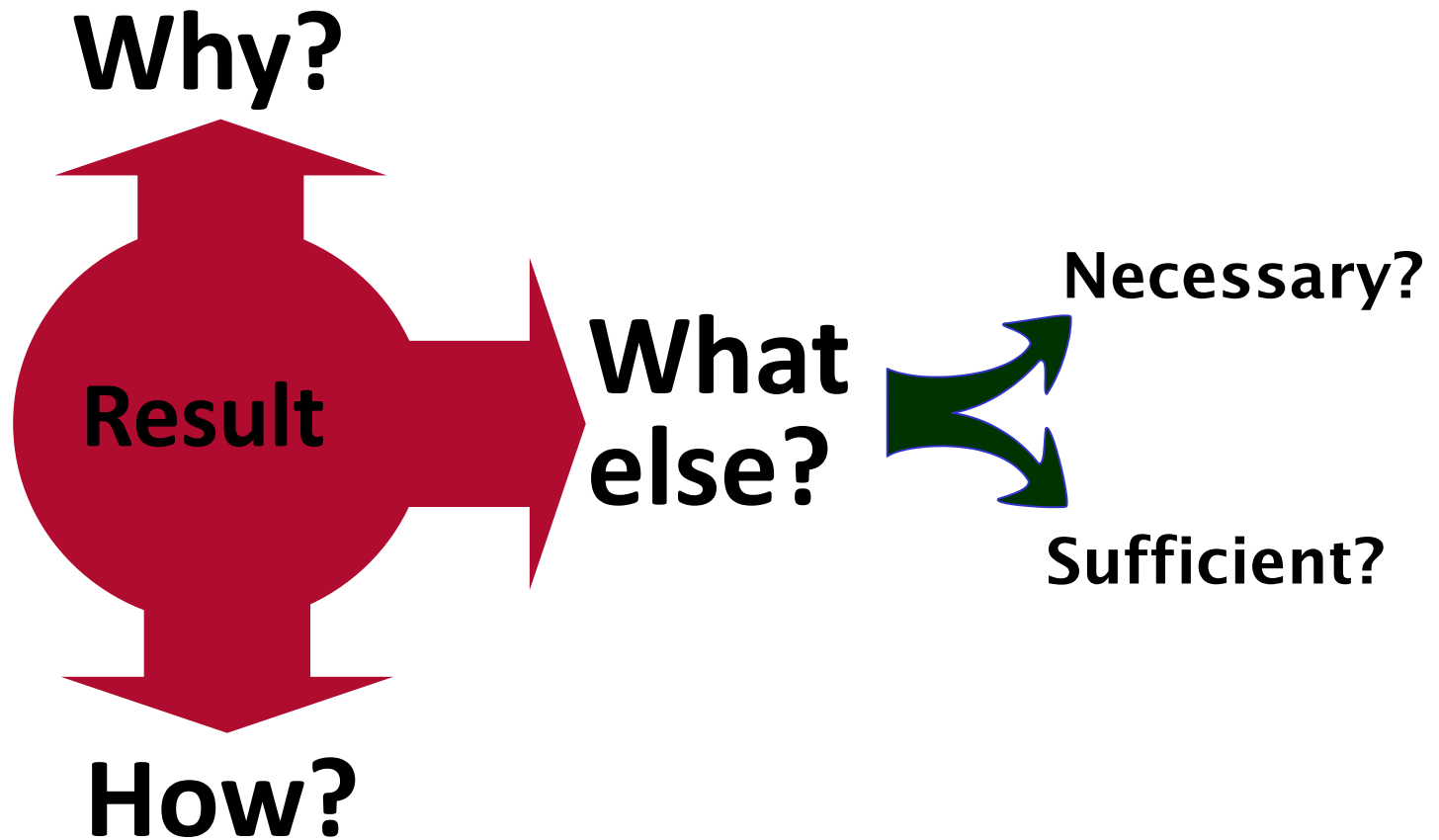


Large Causal Gaps

- Common example-behavior change:
 - Does raised awareness lead to behavior change?
 - Does training alone lead to behavior change?



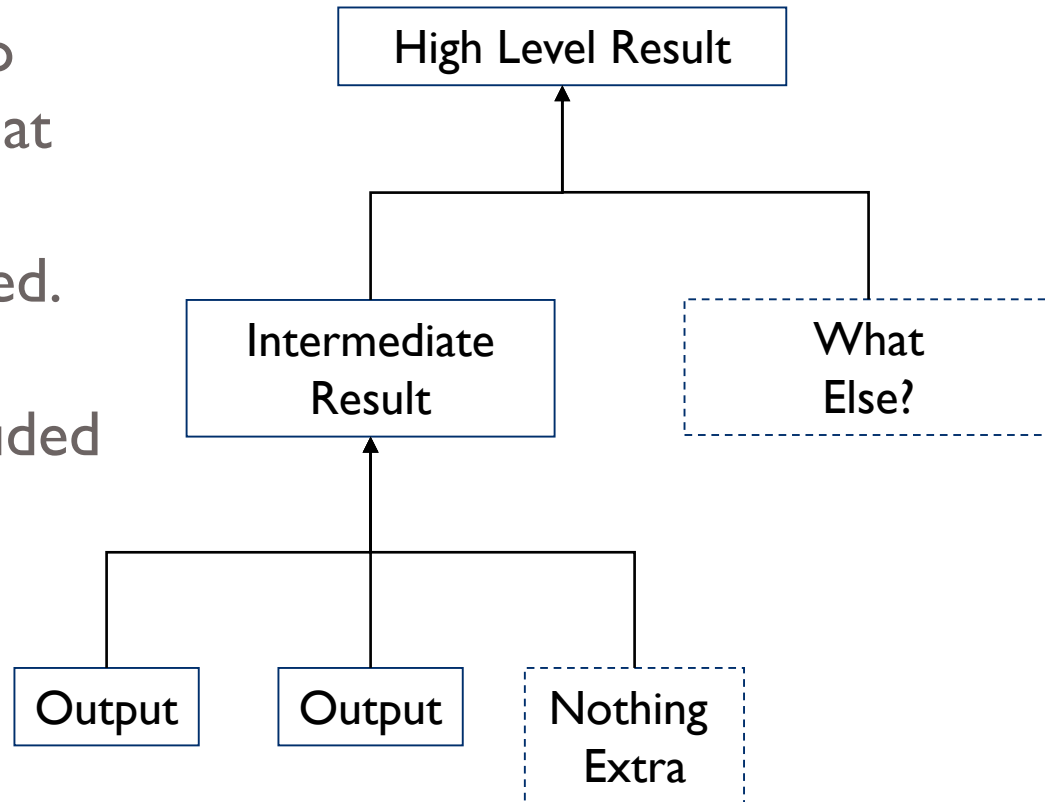
Necessary and Sufficient



Necessary and Sufficient

All the results
SUFFICIENT to
achieve results at
the next level
must be included.

All results included
must be
NECESSARY.



Well designed results statements are...

Uni-level:

There are no “if-then” statements embedded in a single objective

- NOT THIS: Improved student performance through more effective classroom instruction
- BUT THIS: Two separate objectives:
 - (1) Improved student performance
 - (2) More effective classroom instruction

AVOID: “through...,” “in order to...,” “as a result of...,” “so as to...,” and other such words and phrases in objective statements.

Well designed results statements are...

Uni-dimensional:

They have one element per result statement, unless the elements are closely related and both are supported by what comes below in the RF

- NOT THIS: New workplace safety policies adopted and capacity of government strengthened
- BUT THIS: Two separate objectives: (1) New workplace safety policies adopted and (2) Capacity of government strengthened

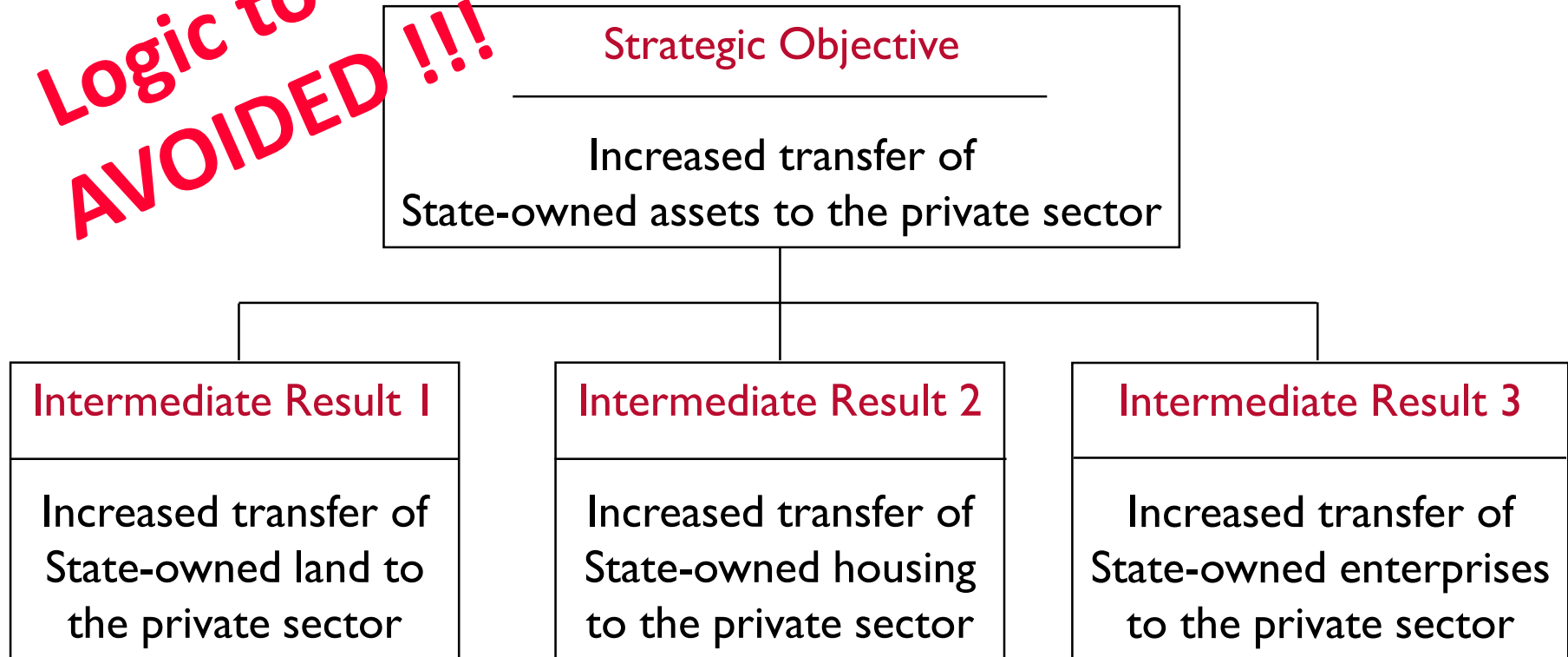
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MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE: Increased quality and coverage of social protection services

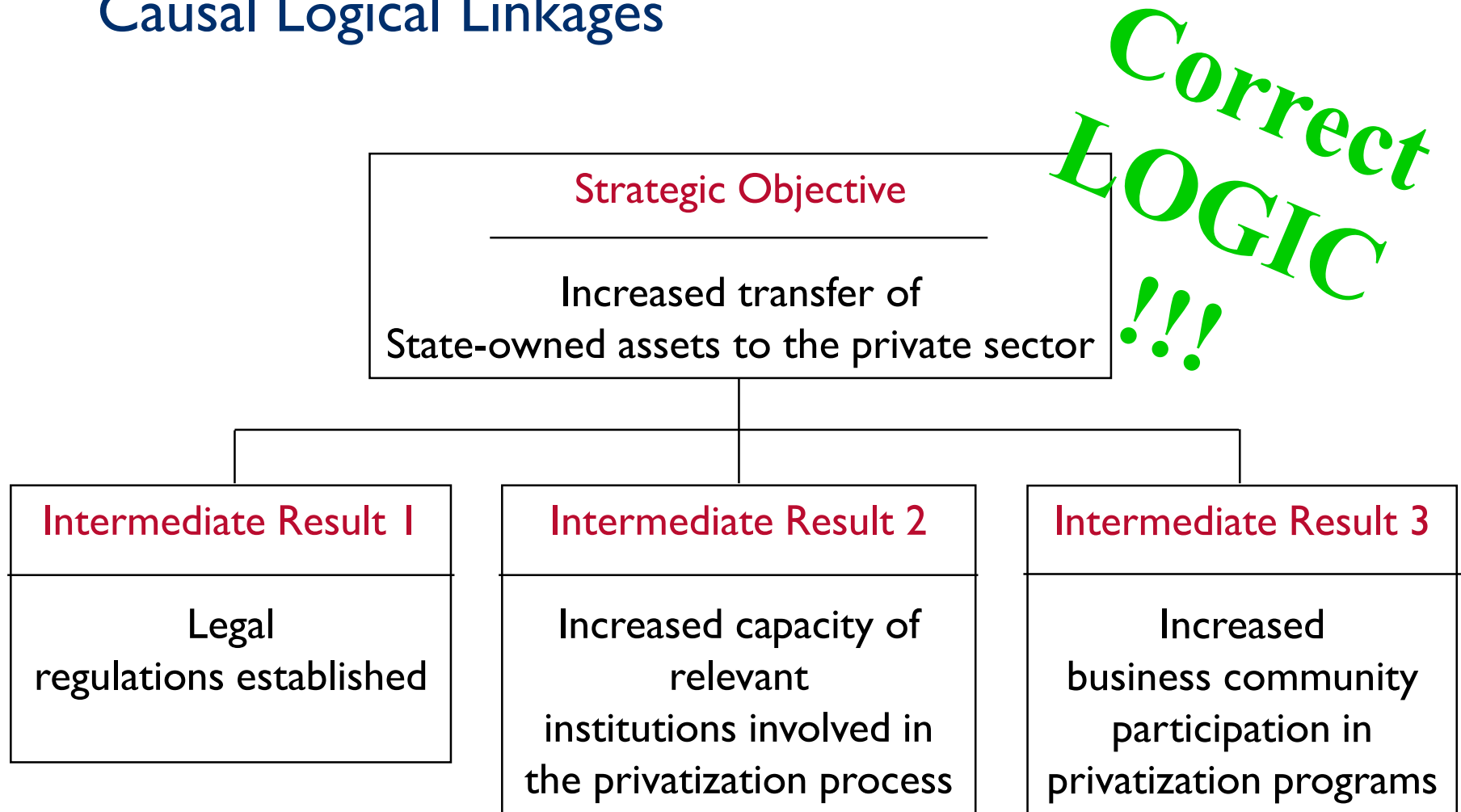
MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE: Improved medical and administrative skills among health clinic workers

Categorical or Definitional Linkages

**Logic to be
AVOIDED !!!**

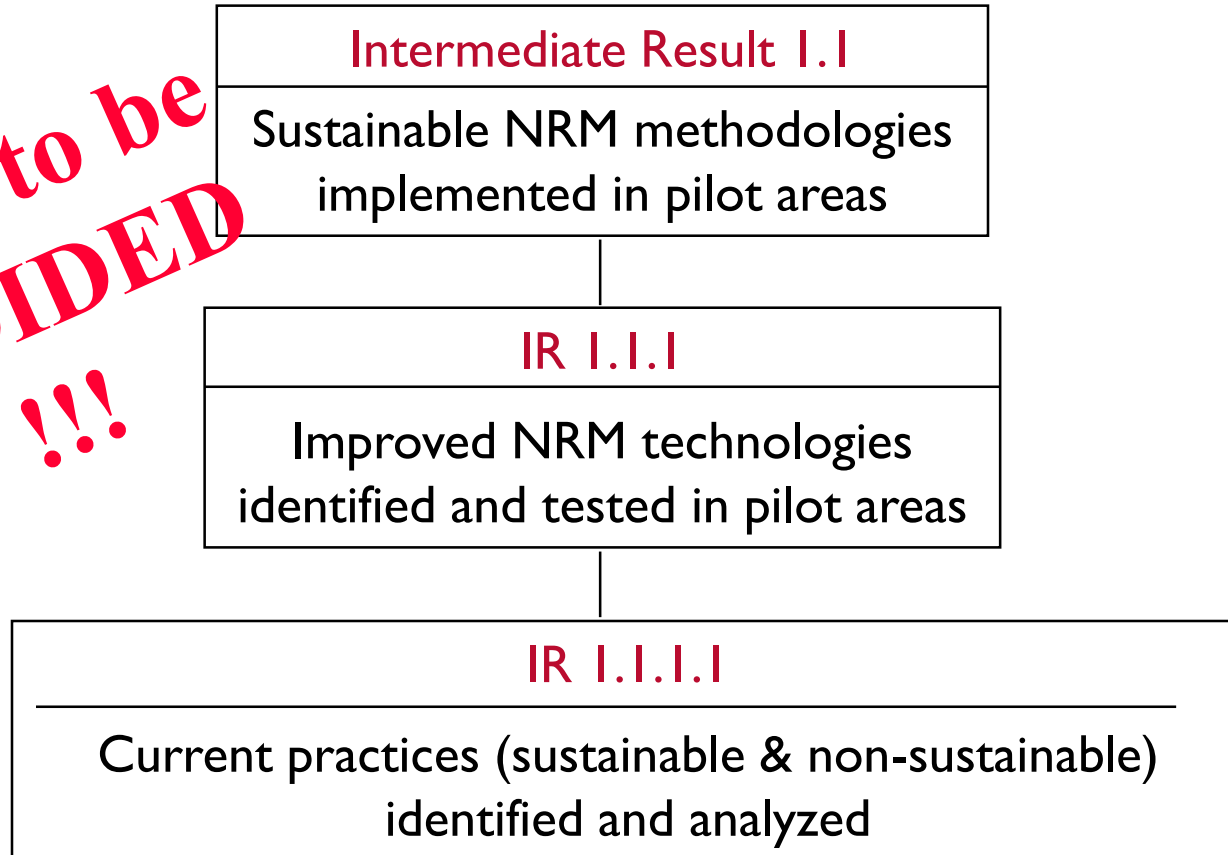


Causal Logical Linkages

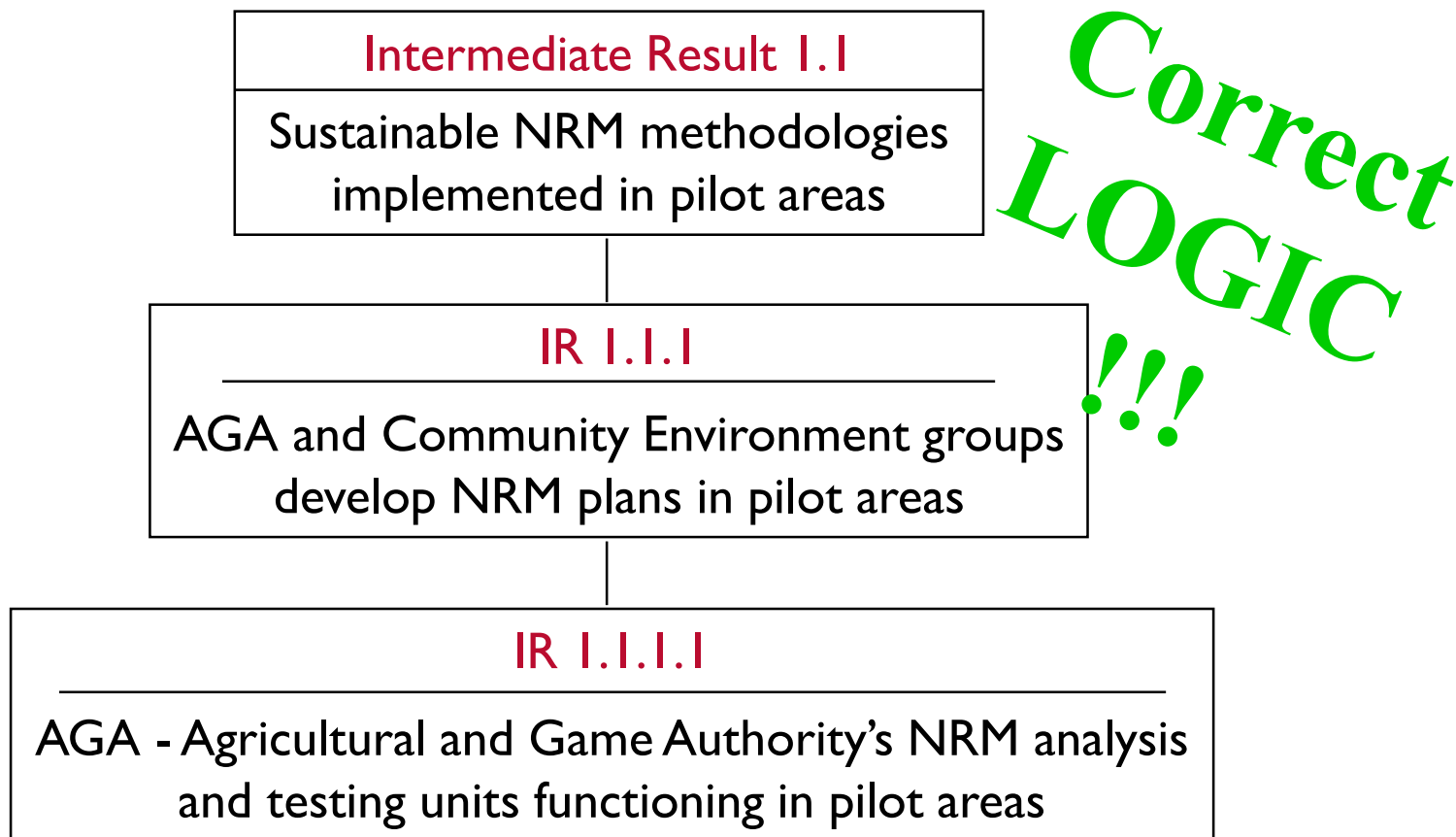


Chronological Linkages

**Logic to be
AVOIDED
!!!**



Causal Logical Linkages



Group Activity

- Under each domain of change, map out your pathways of change at least 2-3 layers beneath your domains of change.
- Time: 45 minutes
- Plenary:
 - Describe your causal logic diagram to the group

Day I Closing & Evaluation



Day 2 – Theory of Change Training



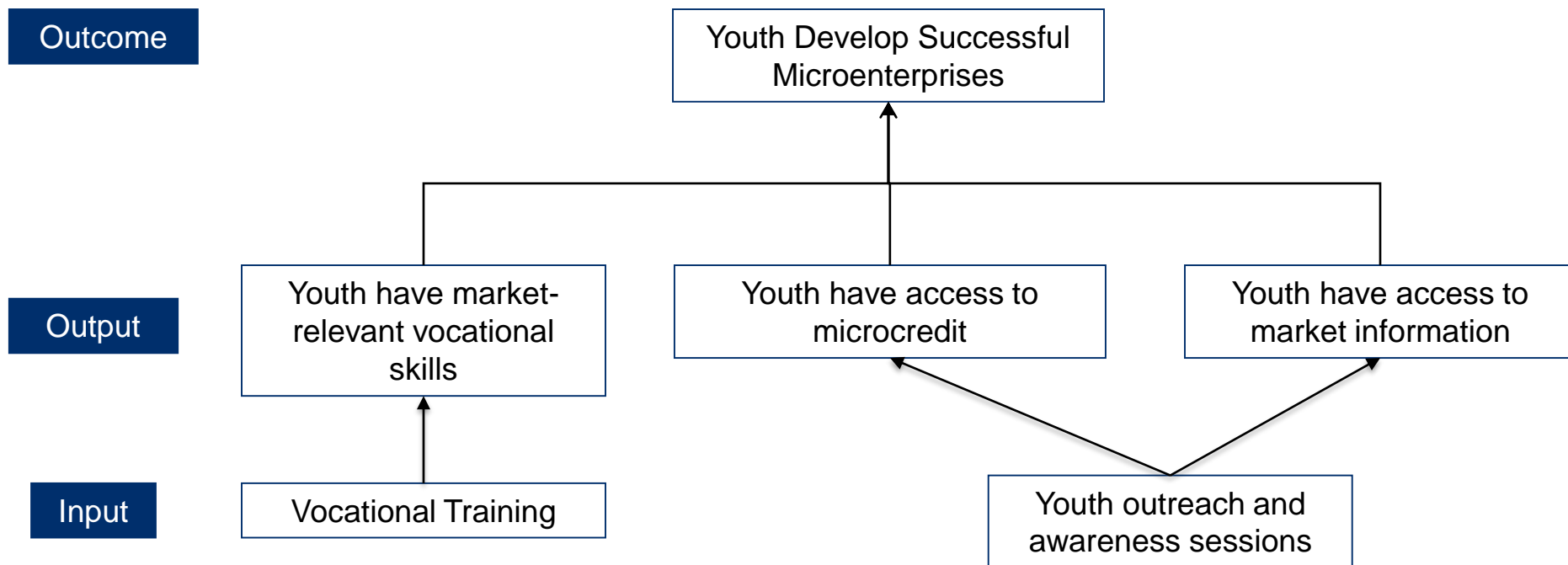
Overview - Day 2

- TOC Steps 5-8
 - Strengthening Causal Diagrams: Complexity and Evidence
 - Assumptions
 - Define Interventions
 - Define Indicators
 - Review the Model
- TOC Product Guidance
 - Graphical Representation
 - Narrative

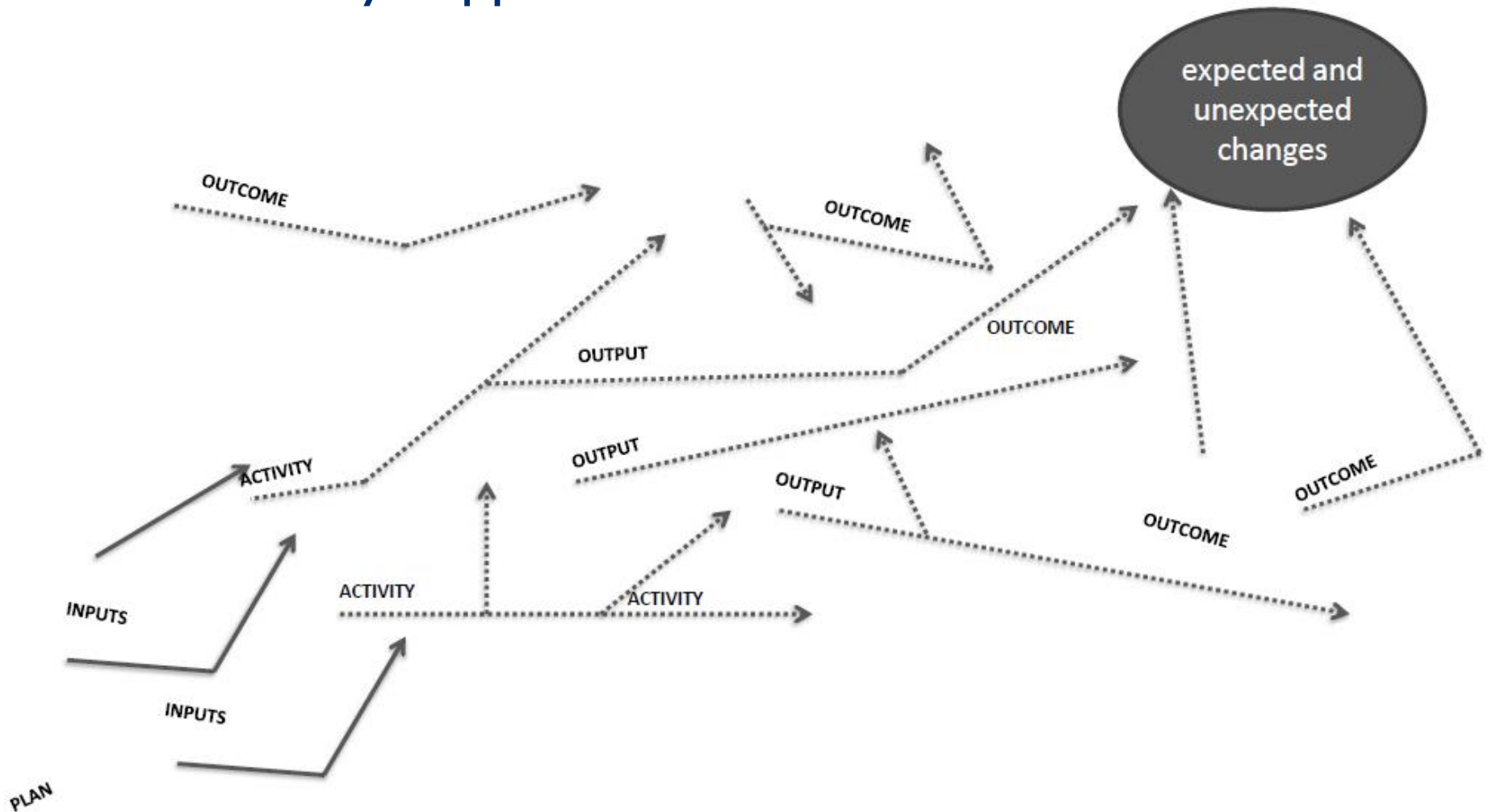
Strengthening Causal Diagrams



What we plan for...



What really happens...

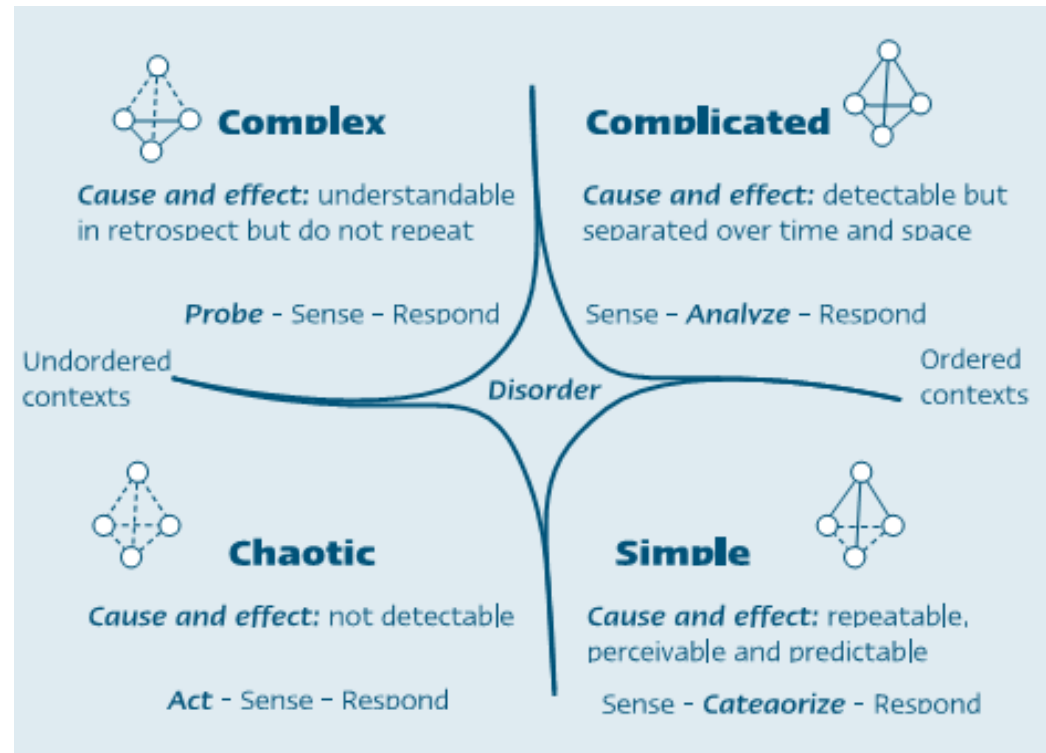


Reality Bites!

- A common trap in developing theories of change: depicting linear change when change in the real world is often not linear
 - Multiple forces and types of lower levels of change may be needed to spur higher level change
 - Causal diagrams and TOC narratives should reflect the true relationship between levels of change and associated assumptions

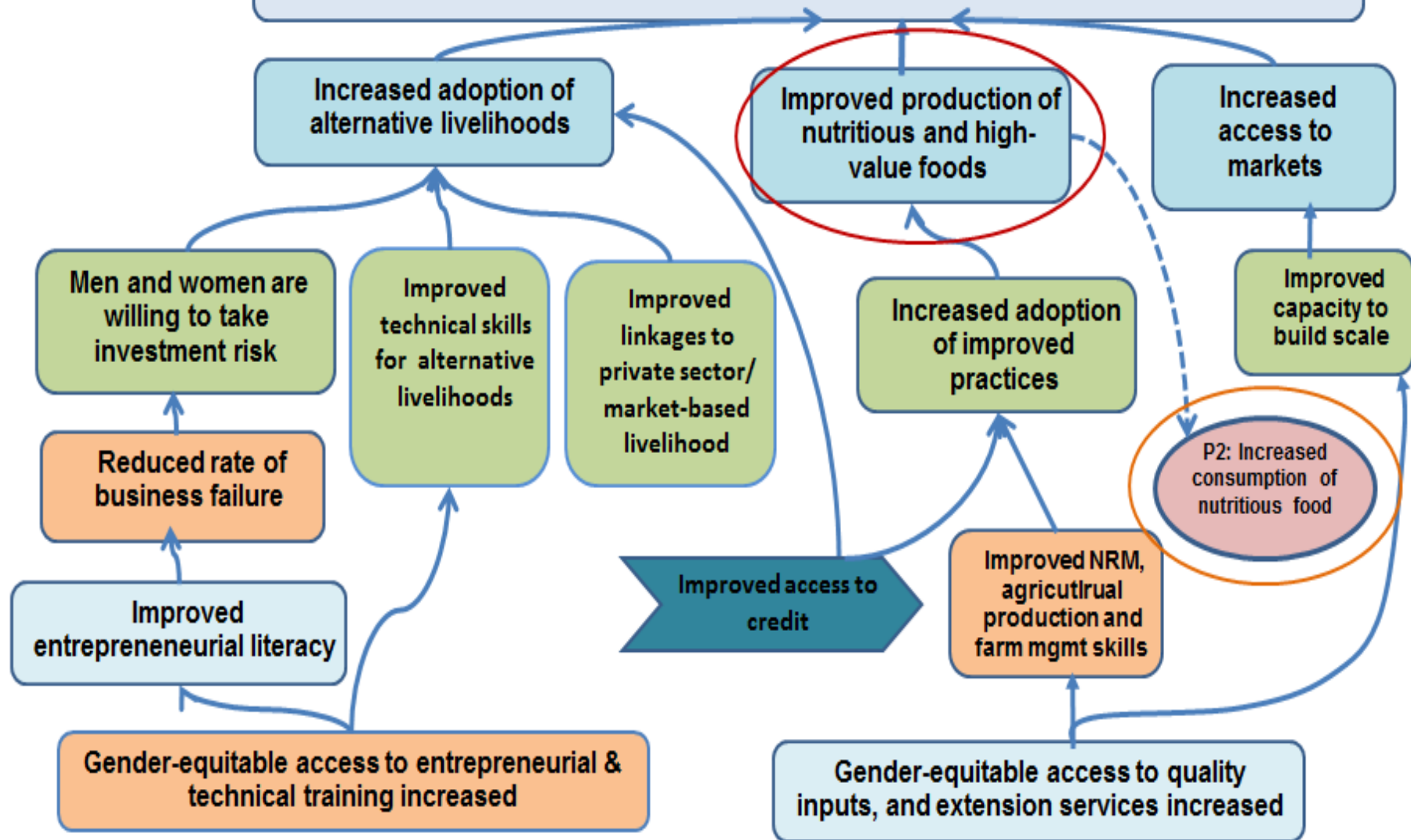
Complexity

- Complexity: even experts are uncertain about the best way to achieve results
 - Diverse elements interact with each other in unanticipated ways to create a new reality
 - Complex aspects cannot be known or predicted ahead of time
 - Cause-and effect relationships only emerge retrospectively
- Projects and their environments can have aspects of all (complex, simple, complicated)
- Determining the level of complexity:
 - What is the degree of certainty about how to solve the problem?
 - What is the degree of agreement among stakeholders about how to solve the problem?



USAID Learning Lab Complexity-Aware Monitoring Discussion Note:
<https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/complexity-aware-monitoring-discussion-note-brief>

Purpose 1: Gender-equitable diverse income increased



Starr and Fornoff, 2016.

Don't Get Lost in Complexity!



Explore and Understand Complexity

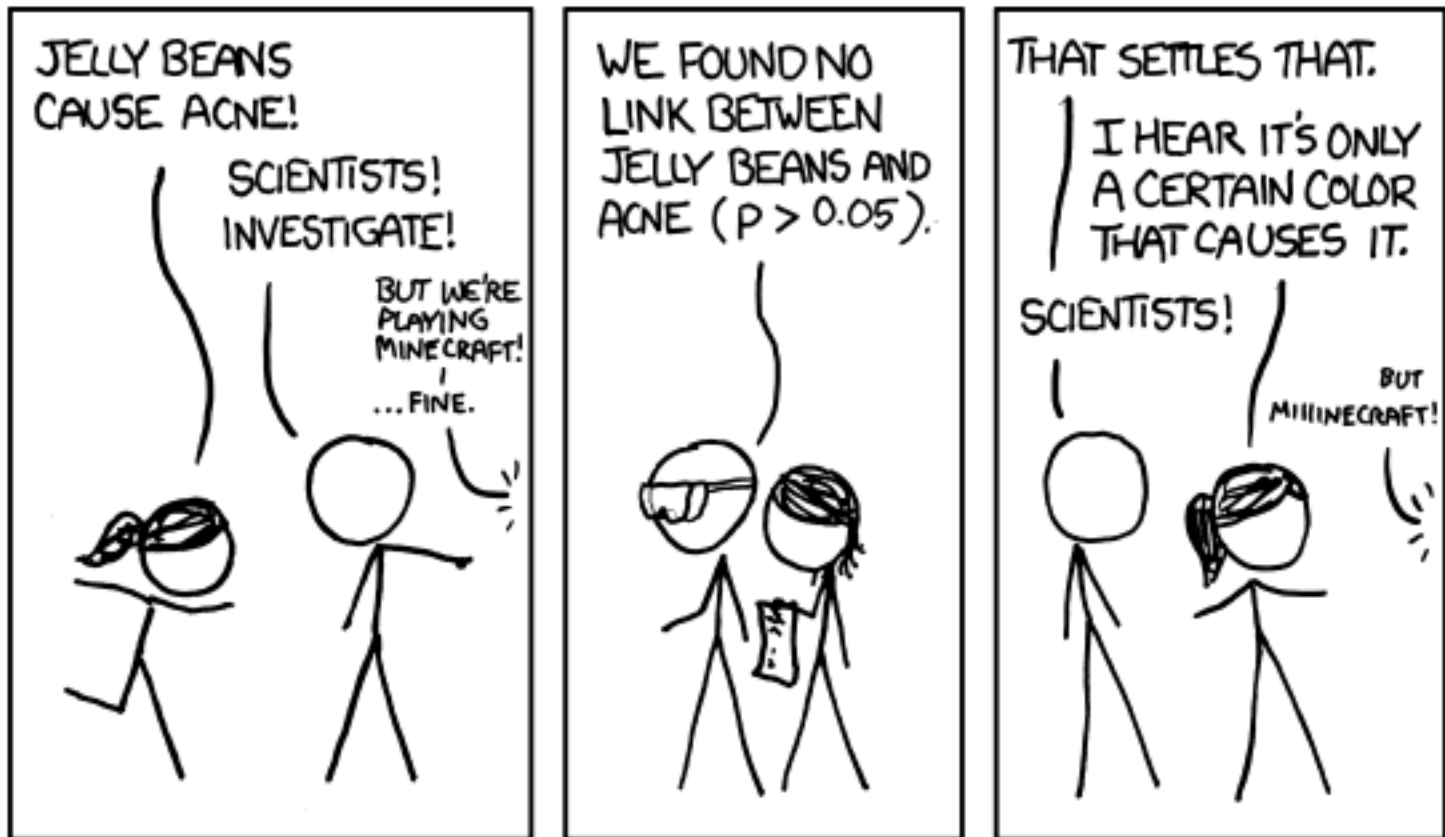
- Acknowledge and embrace complexity
 - Don't ignore it or simplify it away
- Utilize tools to explore and deepen your understanding:
 - Analyses: Political Economy Analysis, Social Network Analysis, Power and gender lenses
 - Outcome Mapping: planning tool focusing on behavior changes, core stakeholders, sphere of control, sphere of influence
 - Four dimensions of change
 - Monitoring indicators: Context Indicators, Sentinel Indicators

Addressing Complexity

- Prioritize a limited number of domains of change
- Mission staff: focus on the CDCS
 - Activities: Focus on the SOW/Activity Design and core intents behind the activity design
- Consider limits to your areas of concern, influence, and control in your causal diagram
- Update your TOC hypotheses throughout implementation
 - The initial hypothesis must fulfill the requirements of program logic and be *plausibly* necessary and sufficient

**Complexity is not a “free pass”
to develop less robust TOCs!**

Integrating Evidence



Integrating Evidence

- A common element missing from most theories of change
- Why is it important?
 - Ground your theory of change
 - Are there theories already developed based on empirical data?
 - Check and challenge assumptions
 - Inform causal logic and implementation
 - Help steer clear of implementation models that do not work
 - Broaden intervention options
 - Help projects learn from rigorous research and not “re-invent the wheel”



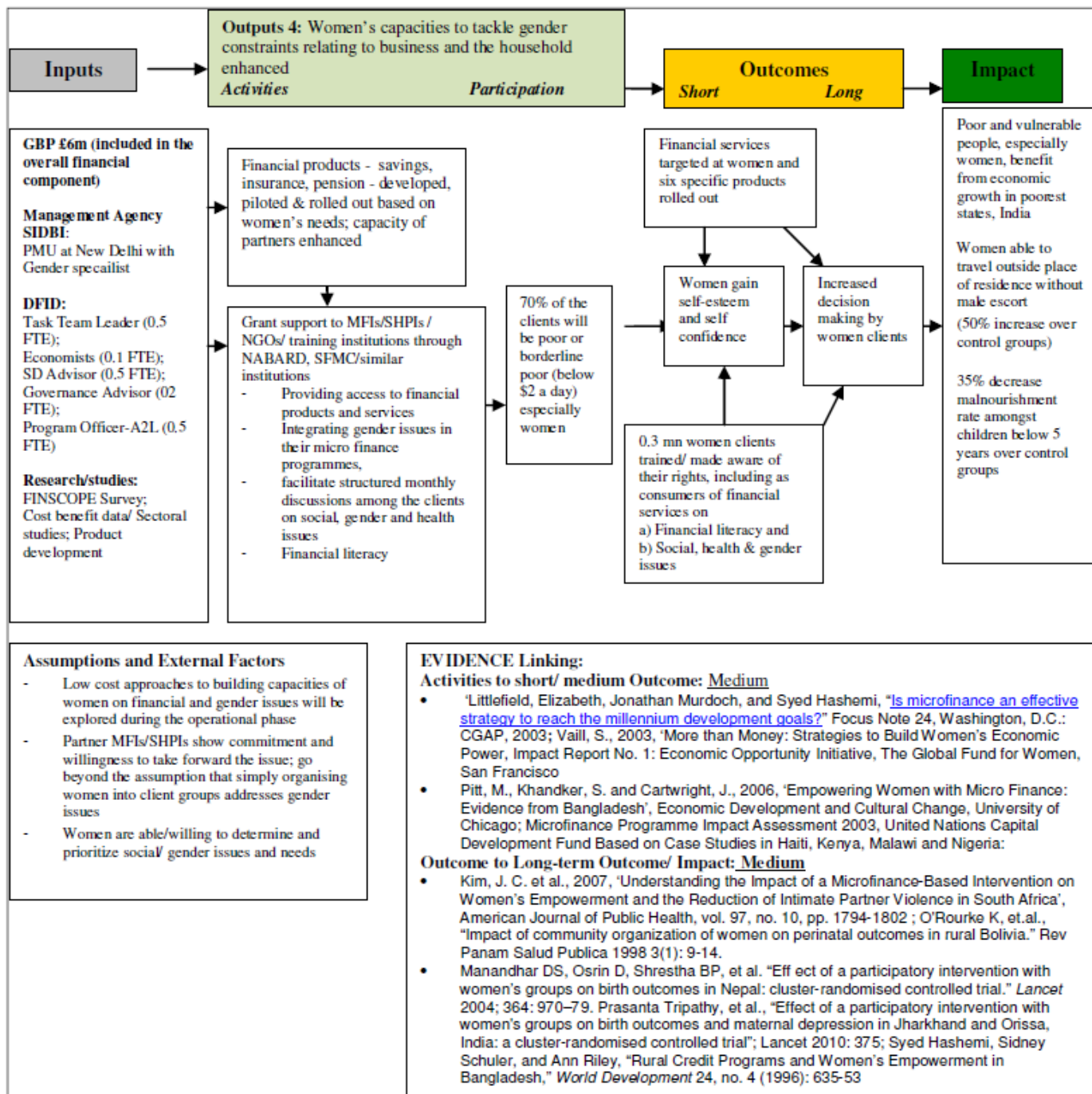
Integrating Evidence

- Where to start?
 - Literature review
 - Development evidence clearing houses
 - Relevant academic journals
 - Existing sector-specific, evidenced-based theories of change
- How to integrate?
 - Cite in theory of change narrative
 - Visualize in TOC diagram or logic model

Development Evidence Clearing Houses

- **USAID** Development Experience Clearing House (DEC)
 - <https://dec.usaid.gov>
- Jordan KaMP
 - <https://jordankmportal.com>
- 3ie Impact
 - www.3ieimpact.org

Integrating Evidence



What If There Is No Evidence?

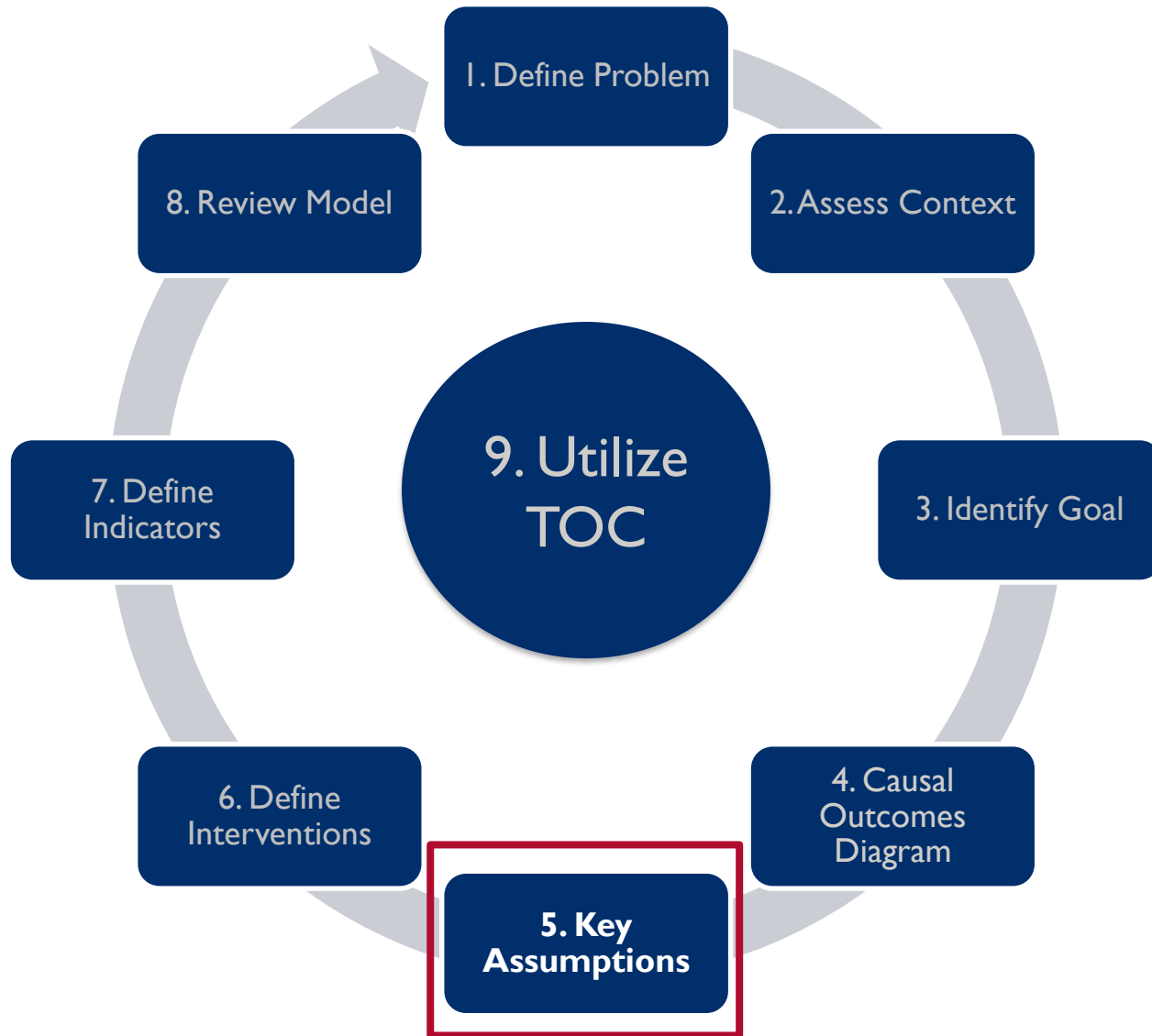
- Occurs particularly in complex environments, where even experts are unsure which interventions lead to desired results
- Be explicit about your assumptions in your causal logic diagram
- Focus learning questions on your assumptions
- Integrate formative research into your MEL Plan during implementation to test your hypotheses and assumptions
- Utilize performance monitoring data and other project-generated information to the extent possible
- Conduct regular TOC reviews incorporating learning questions, formative research, and other data generated to inform the project/Activity's causal logic

Group Work

- Re-visit causal logic diagram
 - Draw your diagram on a flip chart
 - What evidence, if any, supports your selected pathways?
 - Identify at least 1-2 pieces of evidence to support your causal outcomes diagram from a real source
 - What about complexity? Is your causal outcome diagram too simplistic in comparison to reality?
 - Adjust your diagram to better reflect reality, as appropriate
- Time: 30 minutes



Theory of Change Process



Step 5: Assumptions

What are
assumptions?

Why do
assumptions
matter?



Why Assumptions Matter

- Opens up thinking about change to generate strategic options
- Quality of the TOC process rests on “making assumptions explicit” (Vogel, 2012)
- Can improve project/ Activity design
- Basis for adaptive management and risk management
- Guides learning
- Manages expectations of results
- Supports evaluations
- Improves ability to communicate the story of the project/ Activity
- Supports efforts for scalability and sustainability



DOCUMENT YOUR ASSUMPTIONS AT EVERY STEP!

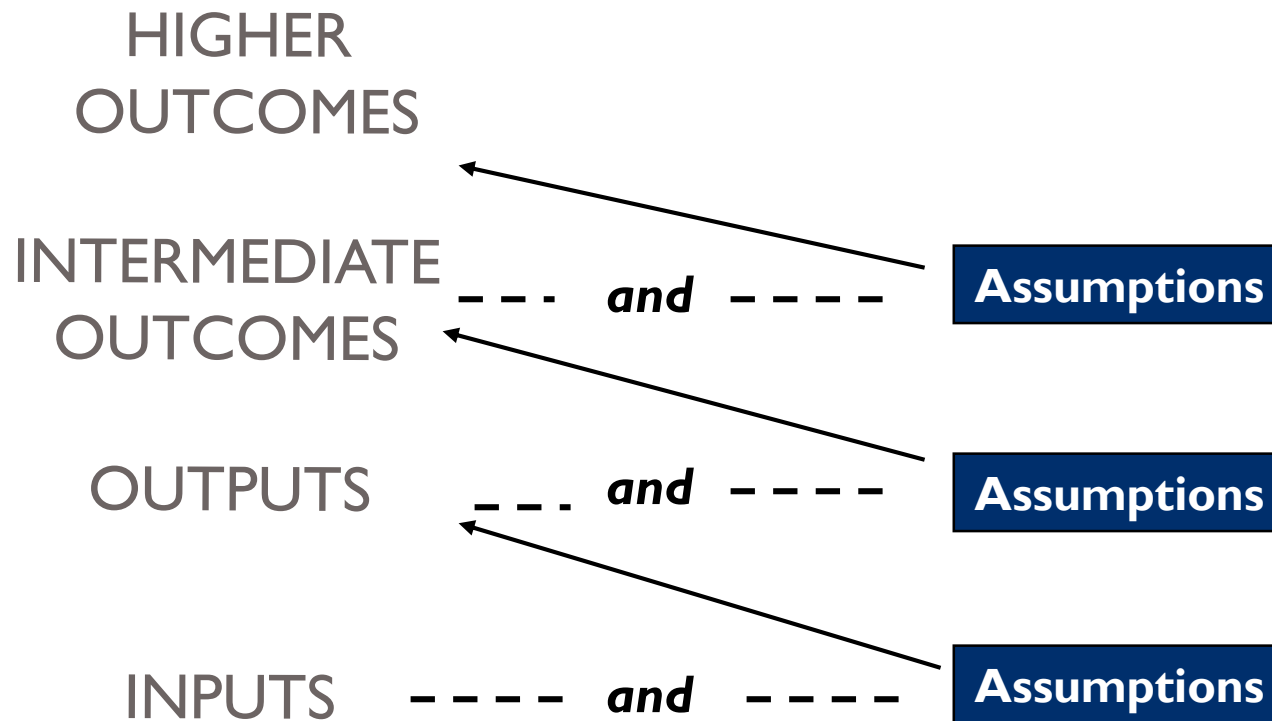
Assumptions

- “Things we believe to be true” (Vogel, 2012)
- Deeply held ‘theories’: personal and professional values, beliefs, norms, and ideological perspectives on why change happens
 - Informs perspectives
 - Influences choices (e.g. strategic and management decisions)
- Ideas about the context
- Ideas about the drivers of change
- Ideas about cause-effect relationships between interventions, outcomes and context

USAID ADS: The stated conditions, behaviors, and/or critical events outside the control of the strategy, project, or activity that must be in place for results to be achieved.

“[Assumptions are] the crux of a theory of change process.” (Vogel, 2012)

How to Develop Assumptions



- Results combine with assumptions to lead to higher level results

How to Develop Assumptions

If we take X action, then Y
change will occur
BECAUSE...

What could go wrong that would
mean that even if outputs are achieved,
outcomes will not be realized?

What is valued
by our intended
beneficiaries?

What things are we depending on happening in order for our logic to succeed?

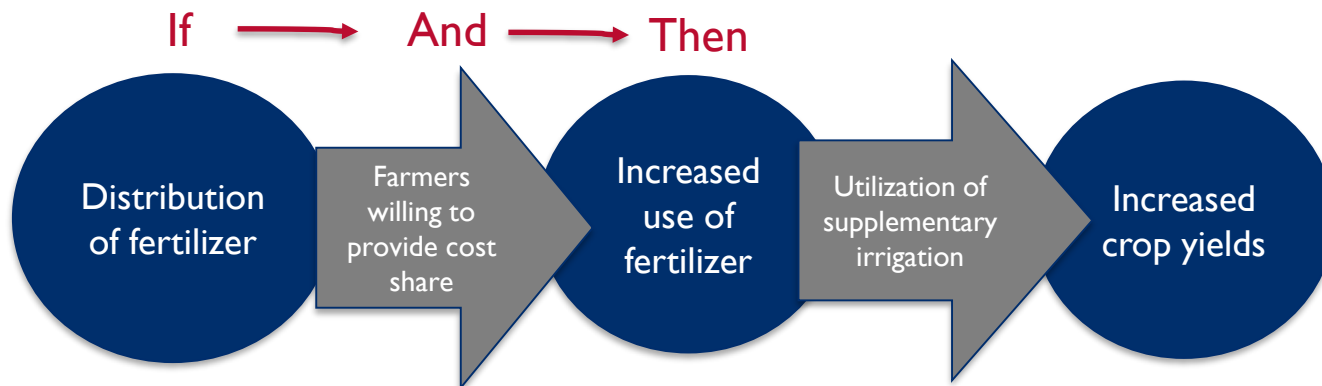
- What do we need the government to do?
- What do we need partners/other organizations to do?

What “shocks” in the
environment might derail our
progress?

Who, outside of the project, are we relying on to do
certain things in order for our effort to succeed?

Types of Assumptions

- **Programmatic assumptions:** implicit ways in which key outcomes are expected to contribute to the next level of outcome
 - Based on evidence, experience, belief of the project team
 - Should be described in the TOC narrative
 - Could include: why a specific activity is needed at a given point in time within the change process
- **Contextual assumptions:** external factors in the project context that are also outside the project manager's control, but are nevertheless necessary for success.



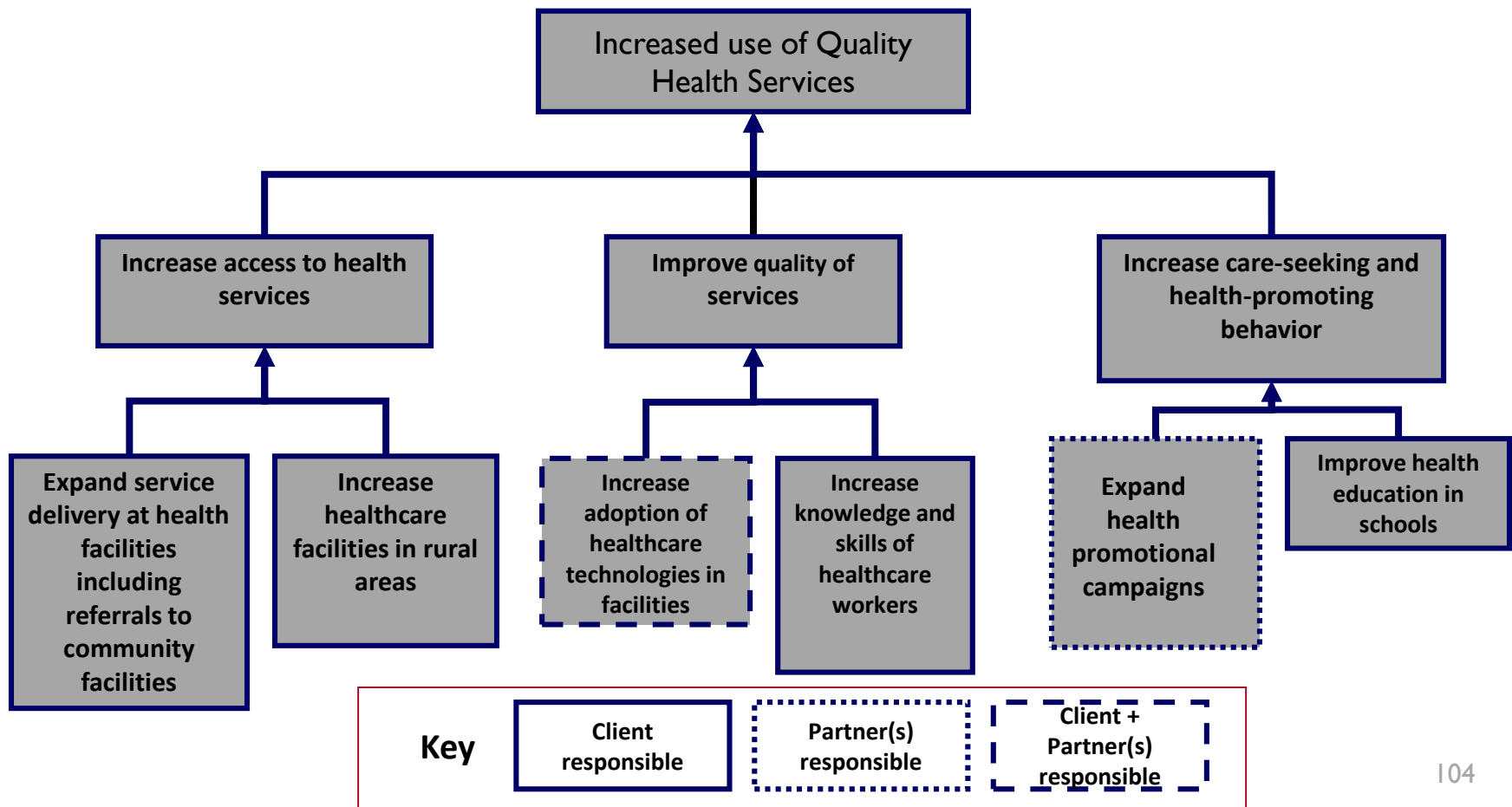
Context Assumptions:

- ✓ Stable fertilizer prices
- ✓ Adequate rainfall
- ✓ Market demand remains stable

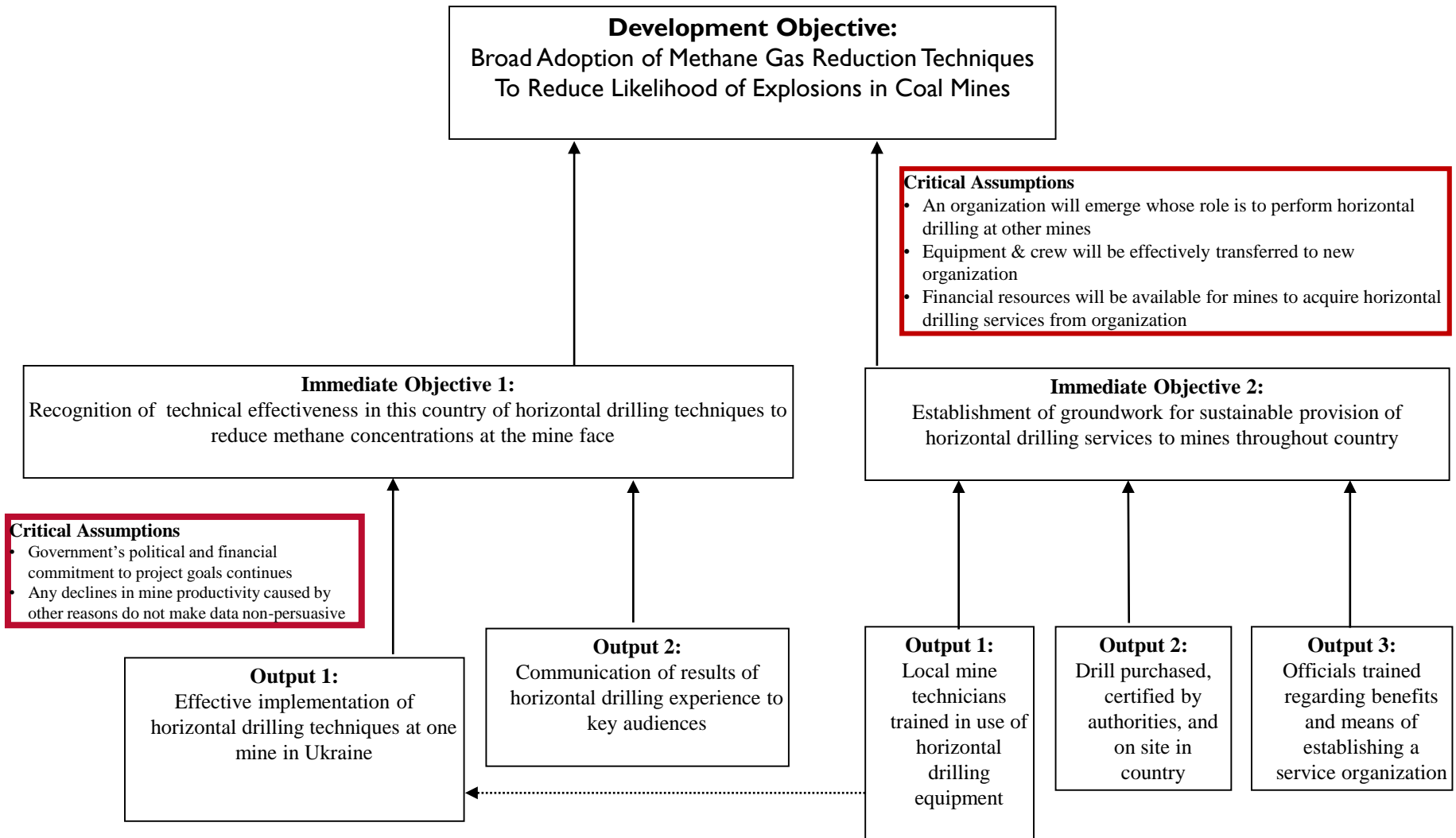
Example: Assumptions

Critical (Contextual) Assumptions

1. Development partners and the government budget allocations are sufficient and appropriate.
2. Government honors its commitment to provide infrastructure improvements to health facilities.
3. Adequate availability of health workers.
4. Private sector continues to be involved in social service delivery.



Example: Assumptions



Revealing Deep Assumptions

- **What assumptions are embedded in these statements?**
 - School drop-outs who receive training for available positions (guards, receptionist, etc.) will be employed
 - Women's health is mainly an issue that involves women.
 - Economic development in underserved areas of Jordan will reduce the risk of violent extremism.
 - If women are well trained and have the skills they will be hired by local businesses.
 - If the quality of teaching improves, student learning will improve
 - Technology that enables individuals to directly voice their concerns to the government will increase government accountability and responsiveness

What effect might these assumptions have on a project or Activity?

Quality of Assumptions

Stronger

- Reflect deeper thinking around perspectives on change, deeply held beliefs, context, stakeholder perceptions and values
- Examples:
 - No dramatically increased level of conflict in target communities
 - Existing World Bank project provides promised loans to small businesses

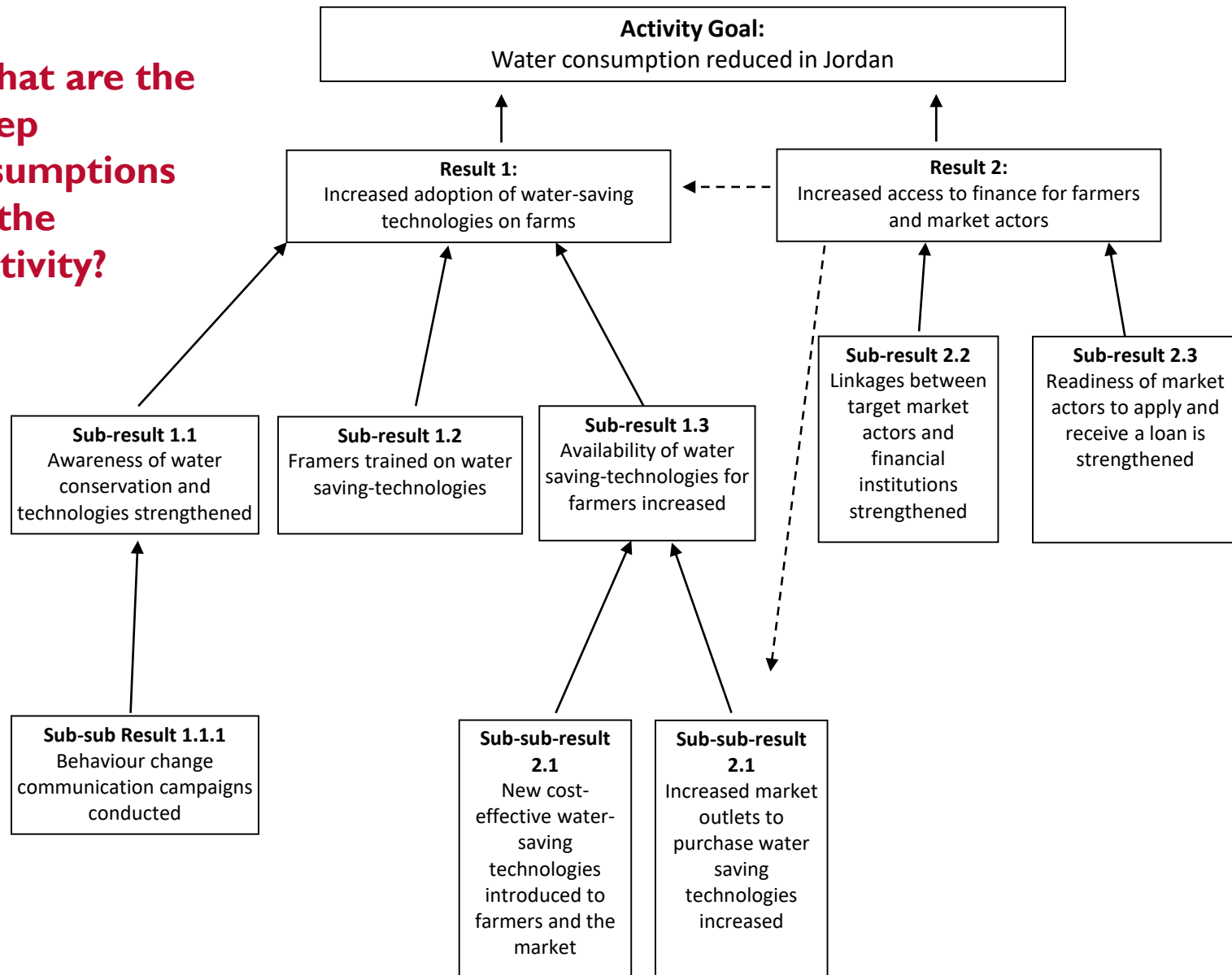
Weaker

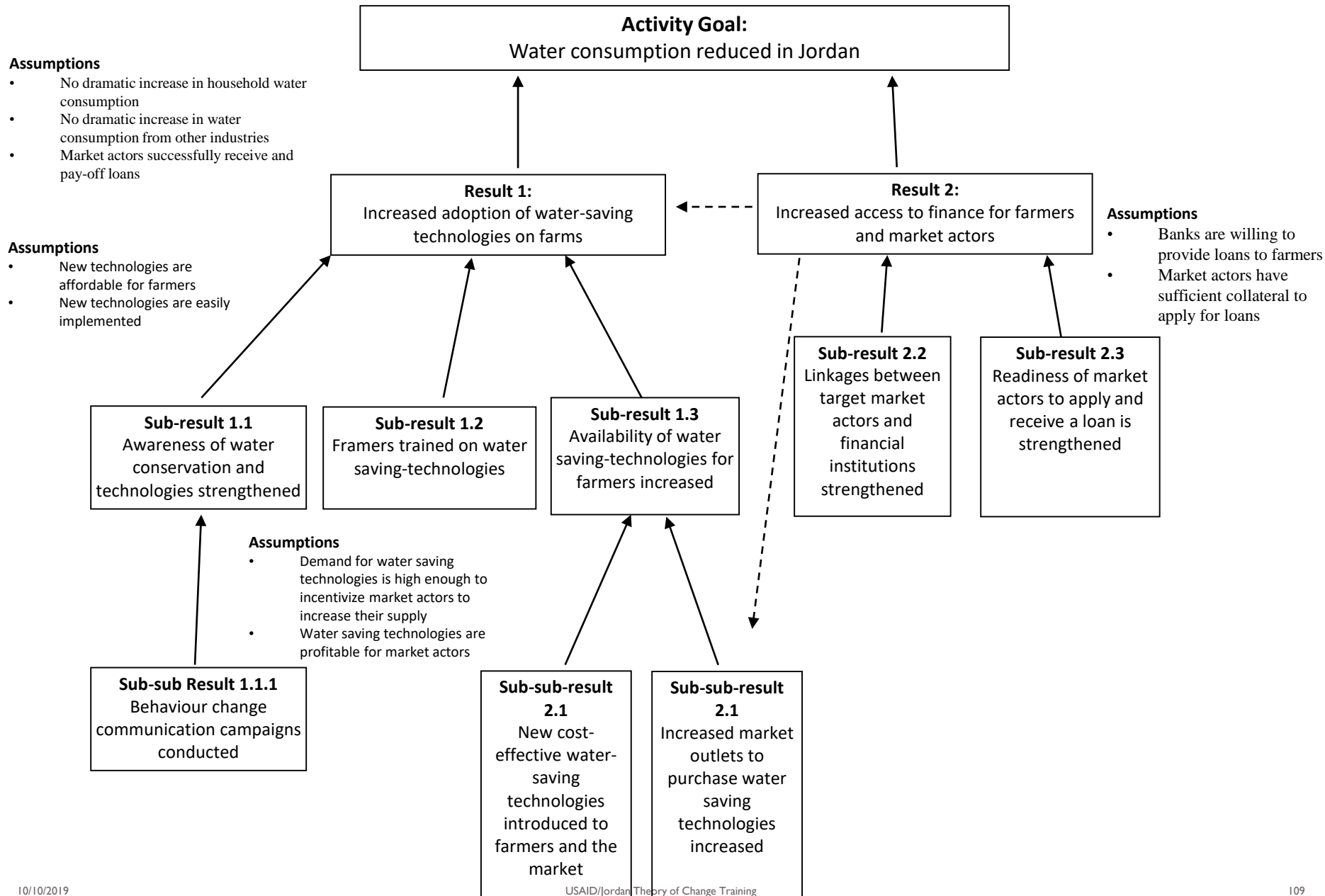
- Aspects or challenges deemed “too hard” for the project
- Reflect only surface level thinking
- Examples:
 - Policy makers read the research
 - Communities are willing to engage in the project

Weak assumptions are hard to measure, track, and will not inform project/Activity learning.

Assumptions – test your critical thinking

What are the deep assumptions of the Activity?

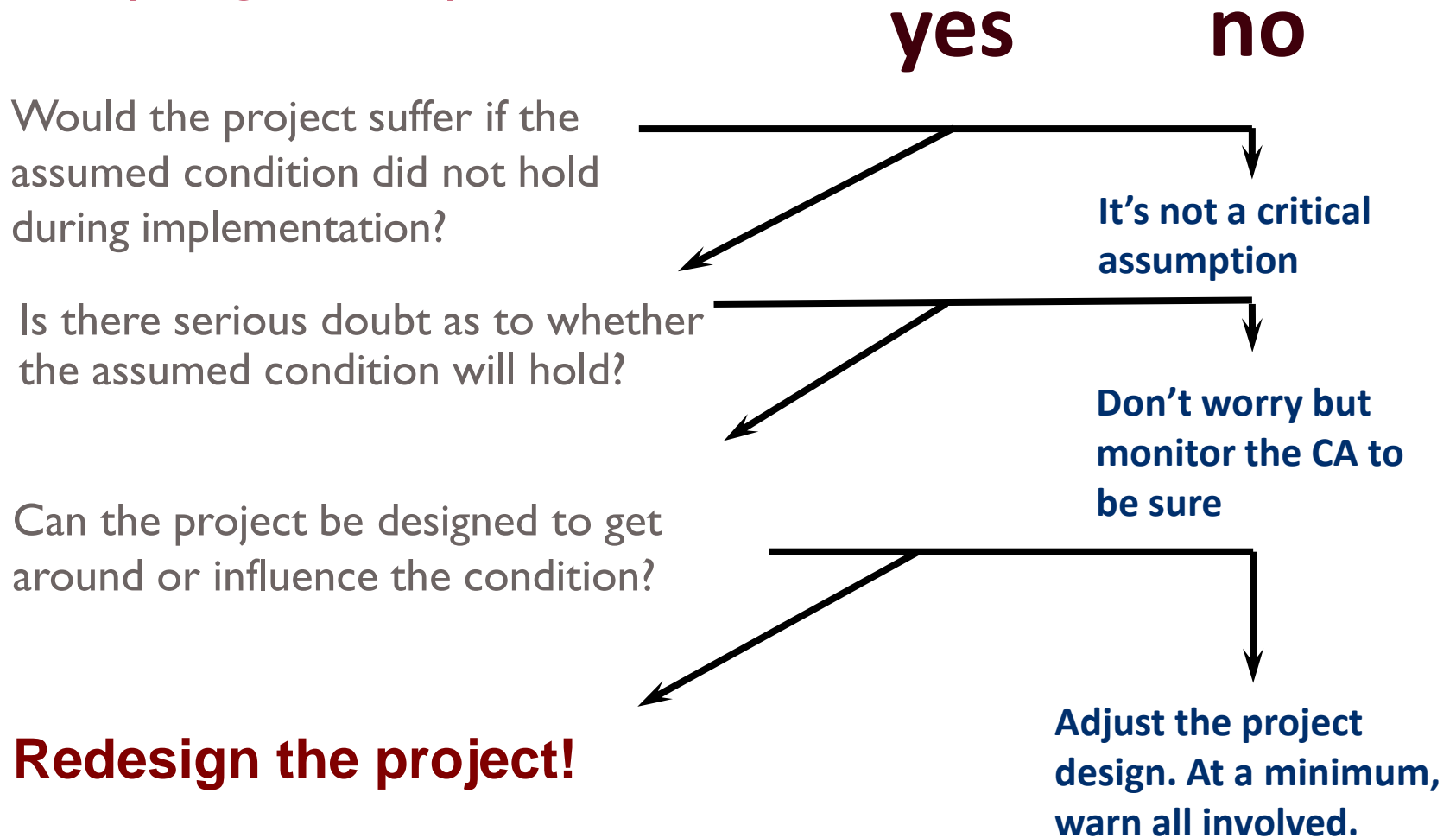




Utilizing Assumptions within the Project Cycle

- Track assumptions utilizing context indicators
 - E.g. elections will take place, decentralization will proceed as planned, permissive security situation will continue in implementation areas
 - Utilize sentinel indicators as early warning systems
- Inform learning questions and focus internal research
- Focus for questions during field/site visits
- Integrate questions around assumptions in monthly or quarterly progress review meetings

Analyzing Assumptions



Common Theory of Change Pitfalls - Assumptions

- Assumptions are not articulated
- Assumptions do not reflect deeper thinking
 - E.g. buy-in from project stakeholders
- Stated assumptions are challenges within the control of the project
- Domains or results overly rely on processes or projects outside the control of the project
- “Killing Assumptions”
 - Assumptions with a high likelihood of occurring that will have dramatic effect on the project/Activity
 - Presence of these types of assumptions may require a project/Activity design adjustment

Group exercise

- Discuss assumptions at each level of the causal outcomes diagram
- Write assumptions on sticky notes and place appropriately within your causal outcomes diagram
 - Label assumptions according to its likelihood and impact on the project/Activity
 - “Killing Assumptions”: High likelihood of occurring, detrimental to the project
 - Medium likelihood of occurring, medium impact on activity
 - Low likelihood, low impact on activity
- Group De-brief
- Time: 30 minutes



Theory of Change Process



Step 6: Identify and Define Major Interventions

- Without interventions, there is no project or Activity
 - Interventions are the entry level or first (bottom) step in the pathway of change
 - In logic models, interventions are often referred to as activities or inputs
- Not every outcome in the theory of change requires an intervention.
 - Some outcomes are “actionable” – others are simply the result of the chain of outcomes that comes before them
- Once interventions are selected, **RE-CHECK TOC CAUSAL LOGIC** and add additional **CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS** related to interventions

Interventions in TOCs - Example

Goal:

Increased use and continuation of FP/RH services

Result:

Demand for Family Planning & Reproductive Health Services Increased

Sub-result:

Increased strategic communication through multi-channel FP social marketing campaigns at national level

Increased knowledge and positive perception of modern FP methods & fertility

Intervention:

Conduct national level FP awareness campaigns

Provide Grants & training to local CSOs to conduct SBCC activities

USAID/Jordan Requirements

Interventions do not need to be displayed in the final logic model, but *should* be highlighted in the TOC narrative

Prioritizing Interventions – Ask Critical Questions

- Potential Impact
 - Evidence-base
- Context
- Feasibility
 - Opportunities
 - Risk
- Cost-effectiveness
- Sustainability



TOC Review TIP:

- Utilize these and other criteria and critical questions to help facilitate deeper discussions among your team

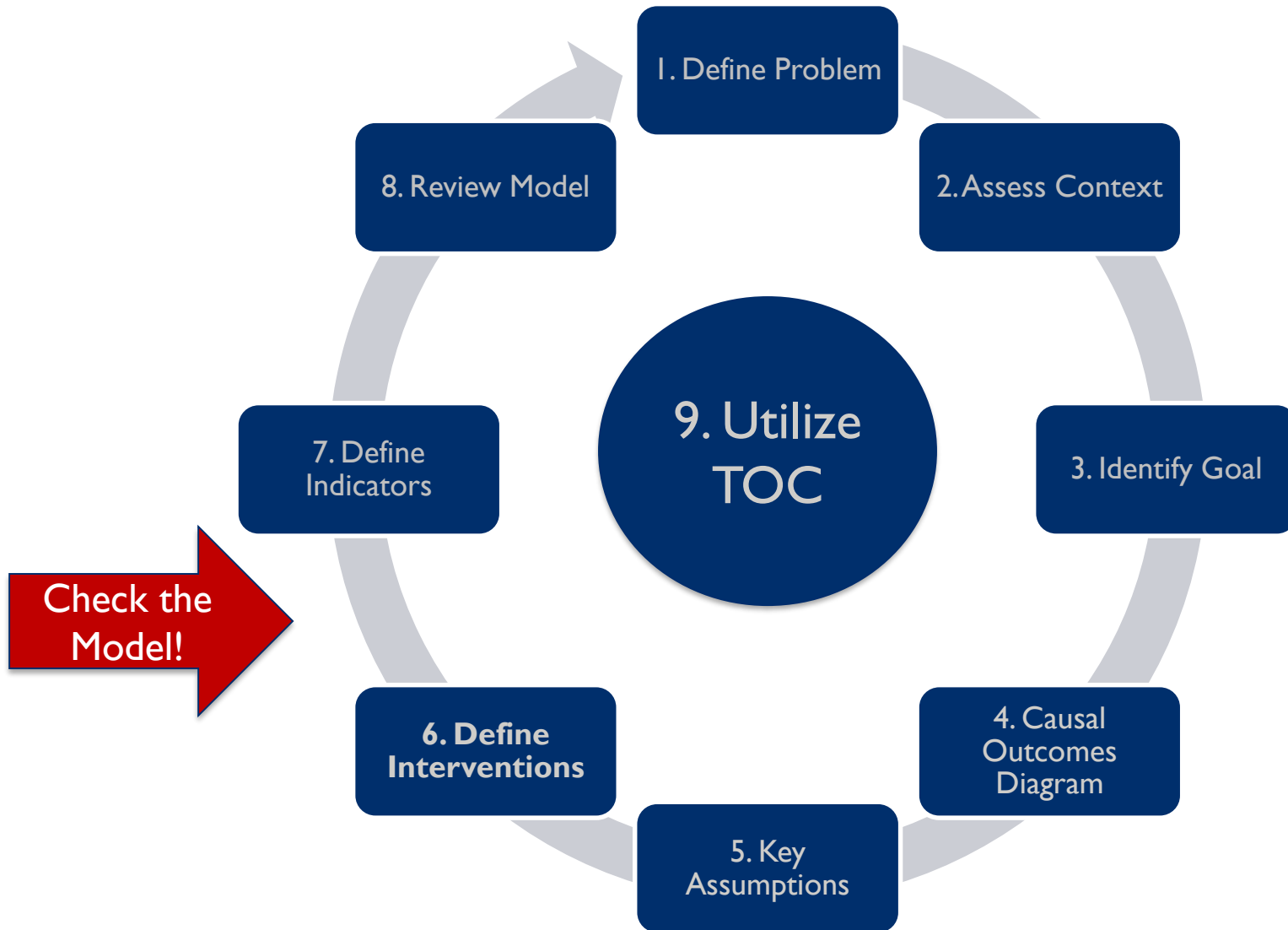
Common TOC Pitfalls

- Interventions are designed and selected without linking to or supporting the TOC
 - Beware Project-itis!
- Assumptions, risks, and potential unintended consequences are not thoroughly explored
- Once interventions are selected, causal logic linkages are not reviewed
- Interventions are not informed by evidence, best practices
- Interventions prioritized during the design/proposal phase are not adequately adapted to the realities on the ground

Group Work

- Identify at least 3 key interventions to support your project/Activity results
- Integrate into your existing causal outcomes diagram
- Discuss and add assumptions between the intervention and output level of your causal outcomes diagram
- Time: 20 minutes

Theory of Change Process



Theory of Change Process



Step 7: Identify and Define Key Indicators

In your experience, when have indicators been most useful?

When have they been least useful?



What is an Indicator?

- An **observable or measurable** characteristic that shows, or “indicates,” the **extent to which an intended result is being achieved**.
- Tell us how success will be recognized or measured at each step in the theory of change
- Provide a method of assessing assumptions, outputs, outcomes, and sustainability
- Shows extent to which expected changes laid out in the theory of change/program design have occurred in reality
- Signal changes in assumptions underpinning your theory of change

ADS Definition

Performance Indicators measure a particular characteristic or dimension of strategy, program, project, or activity level results based on a Mission's CDCS Results Framework or a project's logical Framework (LogFrame)

An Indicator is **Not**

Indicators are **not results, goals, objectives, or targets**. Indicators measure results and help us understand our performance against targets.

Indicators are **not biased** i.e. they do not specify a particular level of achievement or direction of change.

Result statements show the desired direction of change (increase or decrease).

Targets identify the desired value of the indicator that we want to achieve.

Result: Grade-two students reading skills improved

Indicator: Percent of grade two students who demonstrate that their reading skills improved

Target:
55%

Indicator Levels

Element	Definition	Examples
Inputs	The primary resources required to carry out the project.	<u>What the project needs and uses:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funds; Human resources; Facilities & equipment; Partners and community groups •Indicator: Number of curriculum textbooks printed
Activities	Sets of actions which use inputs to produce specific outputs.	<u>Things a project does:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Provide training; develop websites; Offer access to Micro-finance; Provide TA •Indicator: Number of teacher trainings conducted
Outputs	The immediate products of project activities (direct, tangible)	<u>What immediately results from activities:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •People trained / mentored; website operational; Micro-finance manuals produced & distributed. •Indicator: Number of teachers trained
Outcomes (Results)	The things that happen because of what a project or program does.	<u>What occurs because of the project:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Employment of youth in target areas / sectors increased •Increased use of new practices among target groups •Indicator: Number of teacher implementing new practices in the classroom
Impact	Longer-term changes in conditions or situations linked to project interventions	<u>What the project contributes to or may cause:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Economic Growth •Reduced prevalence of HIV •Indicator: Percentage change in GDP •Number of people newly infected with HIV per 1000 uninfected population

Indicator Levels

- One project or Activity's output indicator can be another project/Activity's outcome indicator
- Consider the level of influence you have over the changes in the indicator
 - Place the indicator at the appropriate level within your TOC
- Example: Maternal Child Health Activities

	Activity A	Activity B
Activity Focus	Improving maternal-child health outcomes	Improving maternal-child health outcomes
Implementation Level	Health Facility	Community
Indicator	Number of pregnant women with 4+ antenatal care visits	
Relationship to Indicator	Direct: directly supports health workers to conduct ANC	Indirect: focuses on awareness and referrals for ANC visits
Indicator Level	Output	Outcome

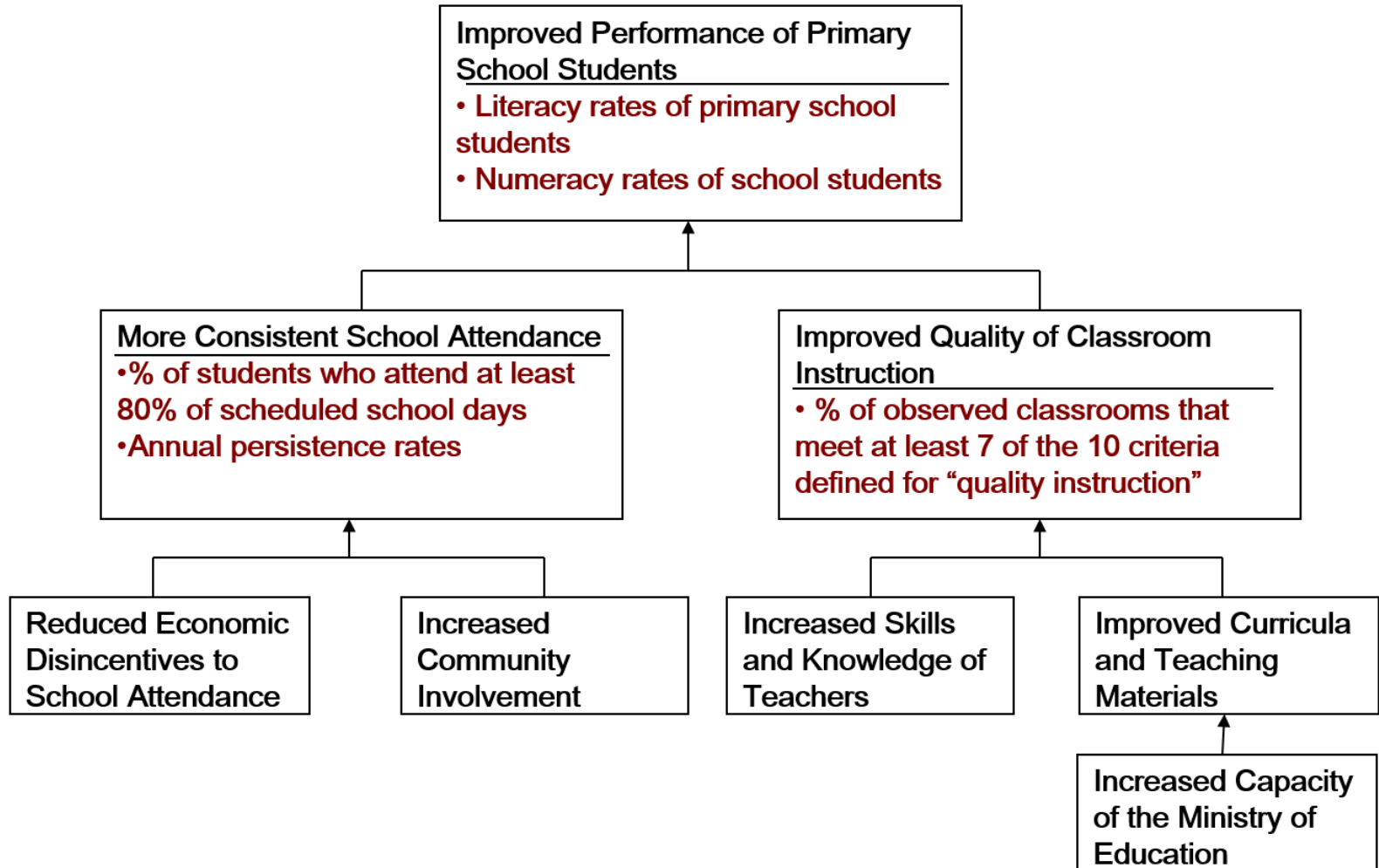
Indicator Guidance

Key Guiding Question: What information do we need to track and analyze progress, support adaptive management and learn about our assumptions?

- **USAID/Jordan Guidance:**

- Indicators should be referenced in the TOC narrative
- Indicators must be depicted in the logic model (snapshot of the TOC)
- Choose as many or as few indicators as is meaningful and necessary for your project/Activity
 - Keeping in mind indicators required or requested by USAID
- At least one indicator recommended per result

Indicators Link to Results



Criteria for Selecting Indicators

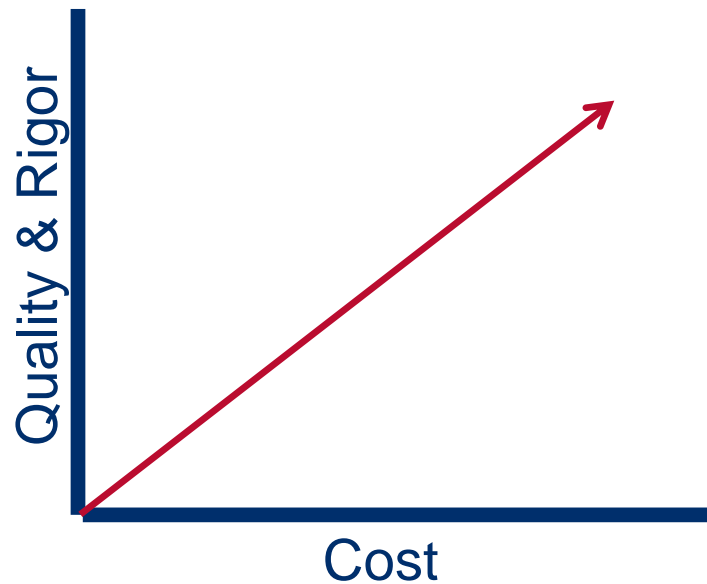
- Utility
- Cost
- Adequacy
- Feasibility
- Meets quality standards
(validity, integrity, precision,
reliability)
- Required by the Mission



USAID ADS: “When selecting indicators....ensure the selected indicators will lead to performance monitoring data that meet the quality standards of validity, integrity, precision, and reliability ...” (ADS 203.3.6)

A Balancing Act

The Principle of Practicality – Key Trade-Offs



Adequacy is a Trade Off

The indicator(s) of a result should capture all aspects of that result.

- If one indicator alone is not sufficient to measure all dimensions, then two or more indicators should be used

Parsimony is the goal

- Identify the bare minimum number of indicators required to capture all elements of a result
- Avoid the data overload of having too many indicators

Trade off costs and benefits in the number of indicators selected for each result

- Every performance measure requires resources to collect, record, display and analyze the data. The more you have, the more it will cost.

Common TOC Pitfalls - Indicators

- Indicators are selected and defined prior to or independent of the TOC/TOC process
- Indicators do not measure the result as worded
- Indicators only partially measure a result statement
- Relationship between indicators not thoroughly thought through
 - What degree of change needs to occur to reach the next level of change?

Group Exercise - Indicators

- Propose at least 1 indicator (quantitative or qualitative) for each result
- Time: 15 minutes



Performance Monitoring Blind Spots

- Are performance indicators always sufficient?
- What are performance monitoring blind spots?



Performance Monitoring Blind Spots

1. Potential broader range of outcomes not explicitly the focus of the project/Activity
 - Unintended, positive, or negative
2. Alternative causes of change not envisioned within the TOC
3. Full range of non-linear pathways of contribution
 - Difficult and unwieldy for a project or Activity to fully document all the non-linear pathways of contribution to change

How can we address our blind spots?

Complexity Aware Monitoring (CAM)

- Principles of Complexity Aware Monitoring
 - Synchronize monitoring with the pace of change or purpose for data
 - Early warning, at time of result, after result occurs
 - Attend to performance monitoring's three blind spots
 - Consider relationships, perspectives, and boundaries

- **ENSURE CAM TOOLS ARE FIT-FOR-PURPOSE**

USAID Recommended CAM Tools

- Sentinel Indicators
- Stakeholder feedback
- Process monitoring of impacts
- Most Significant Change
- Outcome Harvesting

Complexity Aware Monitoring

Discussion Note:

https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/201sad_complexity_aware_monitoring_discussion_note.pdf

Theory of Change Process

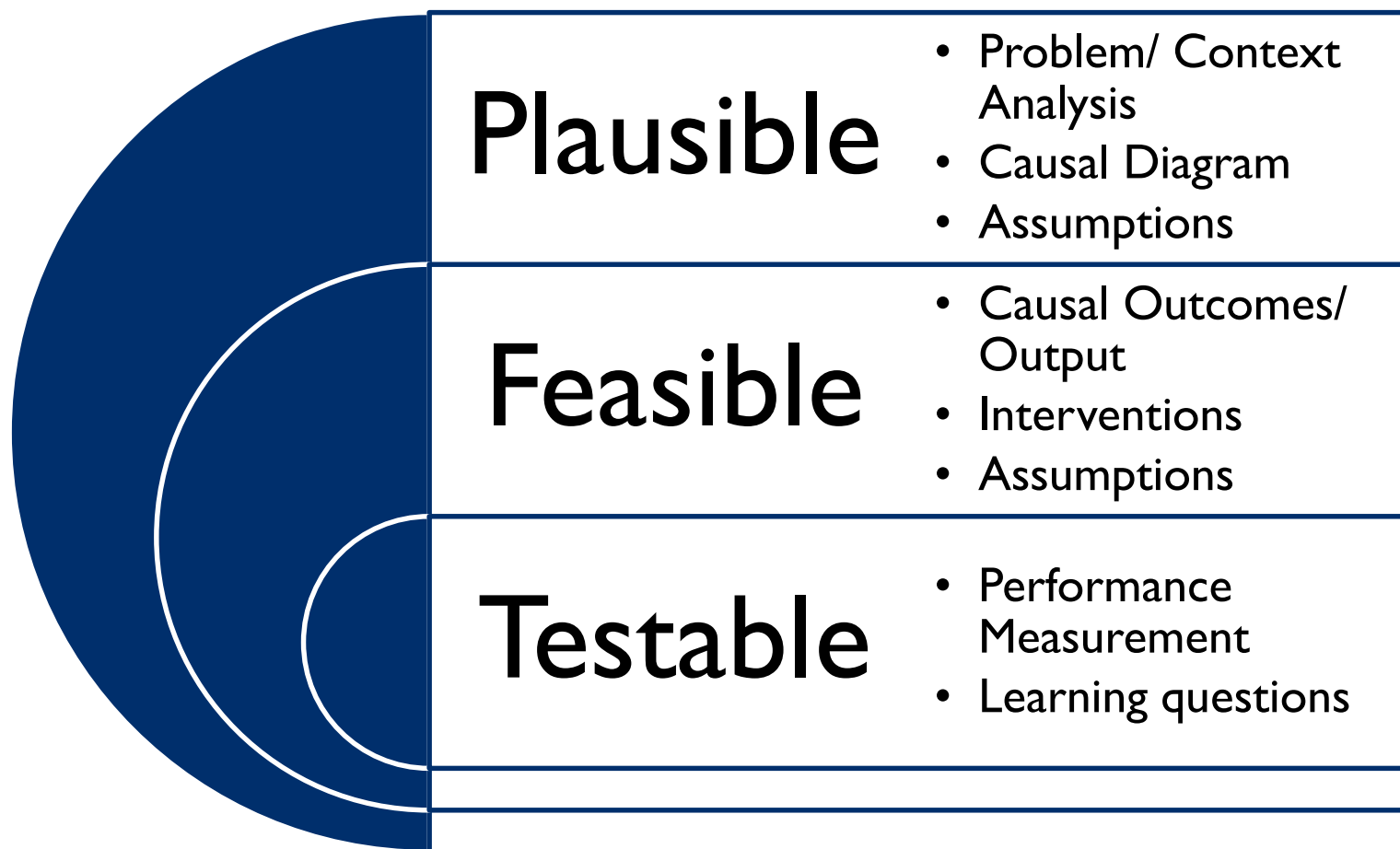


Step 7: Review the Strength of the Model

- Key questions
 - Is it adequate?
 - Does it include all the required elements?
 - Does the TOC narrative and graphic thoroughly explain **HOW** and **WHY** change will happen?
 - Is it **plausible**?
 - Is it **feasible**?
 - Is it **testable**?
 - Is it clear?
- Is the narrative and graphic easy to understand and clearly communicate the intended message?

Would the TOC stand
up to external scrutiny?

Step 7: Review the Strength of the Model



Group Exercise – Review Your TOC Model

- Review your TOC model
- Answer all the questions primary review questions stated on the worksheet
- Time: 30 minutes

Day 2 Evaluation



Theory of Change Training – Day 3



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Theory of Change Process



Overview - Day 3

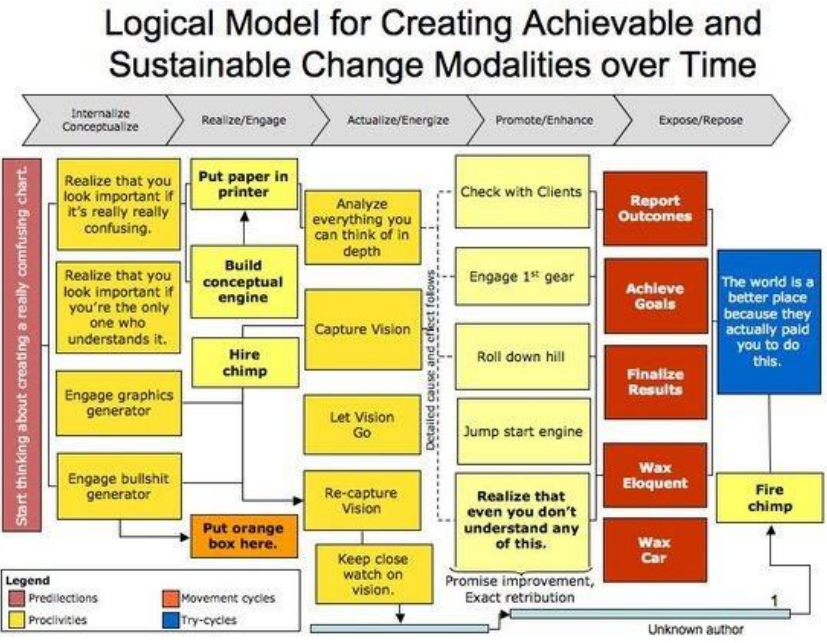
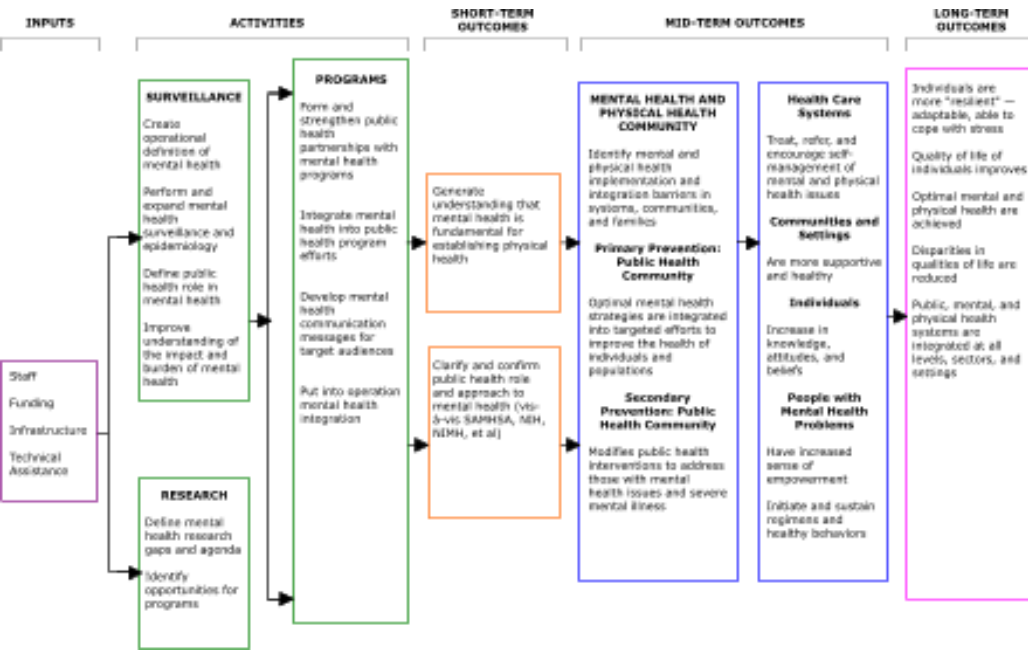
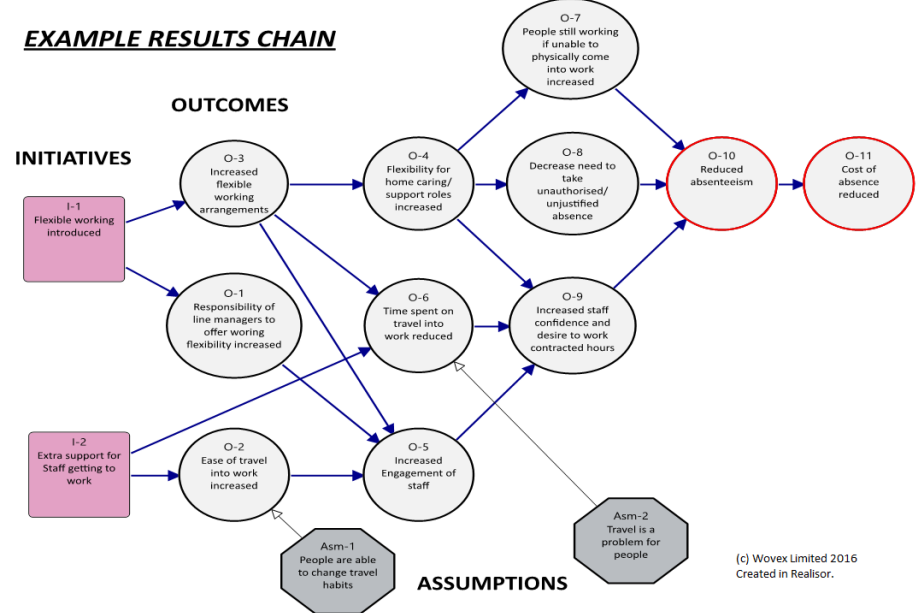
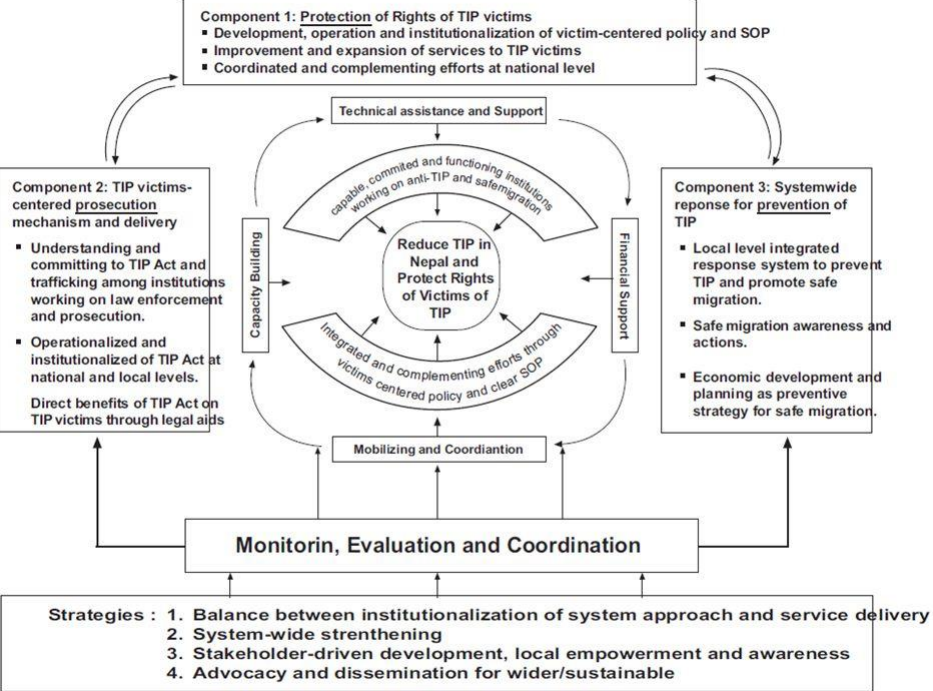
- Finalize TOC products
- TOC Step 9: Utilize TOC throughout the project cycle
- TOC Case Study Review
- Facilitation Skills Building
- TOC Pause & Reflect Session Role Play Exercise

Finalizing the TOC Products

- ✓ Inclusive participatory process facilitated
- ✓ Causal outcomes diagram includes a goal, results statements, pathways of change, interventions, indicators, and assumptions
- ✓ Stakeholders agree: TOC model is plausible, feasible, testable
- TOC product effectively communicates the underlying logic of the project or Activity
- Logic Model
- TOC narrative

TOC Product Suggestions

- Utilize multiple pages to display different domains of change and related causal pathways
 - E.g. 1 page overview, 1 page per project component
- Keep the visualization simple but valid
 - Provide detail in the narrative
- Dotted lines to indicate indirect relationships or relationships across results



Transferring TOCs to Logic Models

- Logic models are snapshots of TOCs
 - Conveys major results (IRs, Sub-IRs, Results, Sub-results)
 - Causal linkages between major results
 - Indicators to measure major results
 - Critical Assumptions (contextual assumptions, outside of the control of the program)
- Complete this step after the TOC process



LOGIC MODELS – A SNAPSHOT OF THE TOC - ARE REQUIRED

TOC Narrative – Why have a narrative?

- Add information not easily communicated graphically
- Clarify assumptions behind the graphic
- Convey the degree of certainty and under what circumstances the pathways portrayed in the diagrams will most likely occur
- Integrate and reference existing evidence for why certain outcomes are to happen
- Outline conditions that could threaten progress along the pathways
- Acknowledge the work of other actors which are critical or supplemental to the work of your project/ Activity
- **TELL THE STORY OF YOUR PROJECT / ACTIVITY**

**TOC
NARRATIVES
ARE
REQUIRED
BY USAID**

TOC Narrative Guidance

- Complete AFTER the TOC graphic/Logic model snapshot is completed
- Summarize the TOC graphic and integrate other information not easily conveyed in a graphic
- Organize narrative by key results
- Ensure TOC narratives/graphics and work plans complement each other

I just need
the main ideas



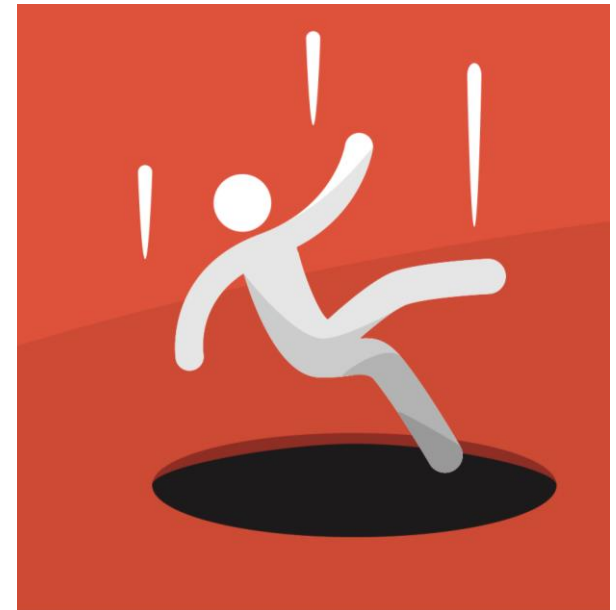
Components of a Complete TOC Narrative

- **The context** in which the development problem is situated
- **Intended results and sub-results**
- **Description of HOW and WHY** change is expected to happen
 - Causal pathways leading to the desired change (in part, if-then statements can be used)
 - Evidence (as applicable) supporting hypothesized causal linkages
- **Major interventions** that USAID and others will undertake to catalyze these outcomes
 - Include collaboration/coordination with other actors
- **Key assumptions** that underlie the success of this theory
 - Programmatic assumptions
 - Critical (contextual) assumptions
- **Key indicators** to monitor how progress unfolds during implementation

USAID/Jordan Activity MEL Plan Template, <https://jordankmportal.com/resources/activity-monitoring-and-evaluation-plan-template-amep>

Common Pitfalls – TOC Narrative

- Does not tell HOW and WHY change is expected to occur
- A series of if-then statements
- Unclear causal logic (visual and narrative)
- Does not align with or reference the logic model
- Does not make programmatic assumptions clear
- No reference to existing evidence
- Unclear organization of the narrative
- Copy and paste from the proposal
- Work plan and TOC do not match



Changes over Time

- TOCs are models to be tested
 - Reality is always slightly different and more complicated or complex than envisioned
 - Be prepared for change
 - Be explicit about your assumptions
 - Highlight your learning questions
- TOCs are NEVER final products



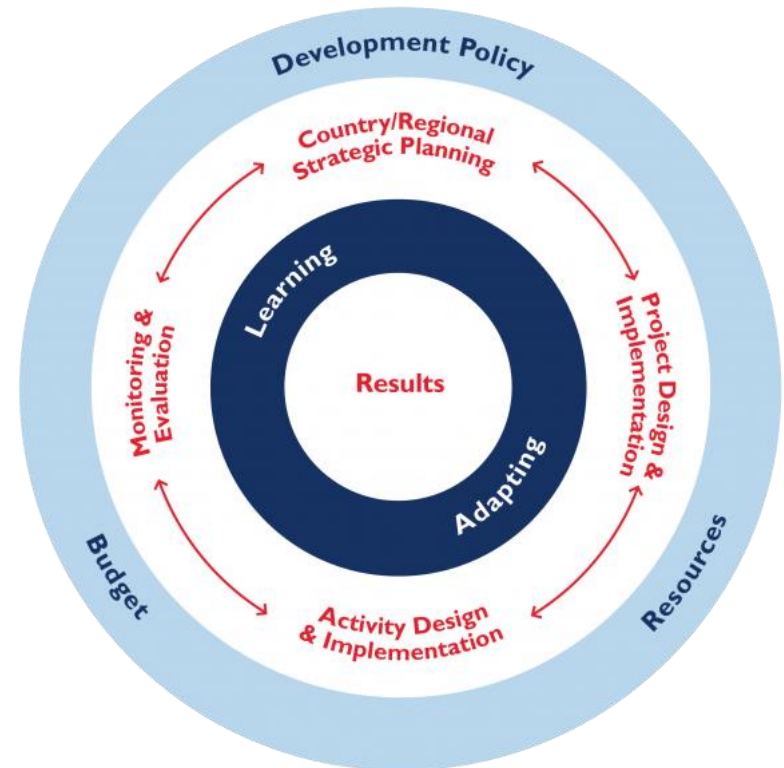
Theory of Change Process



Step 9: Utilize TOC Throughout the Project Cycle

USAID ADS 201

- **Apply analytic rigor:** Make strategic choices based on conclusions supported by evidence
- **Manage adaptively:** make adjustments in response to new information and context changes
- **Promote sustainability:** Generate lasting changes that can be sustained by local actors
- **Utilize diverse approaches for increased flexibility:** use a range of modalities to address diverse development challenges



Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting



Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting



Learning

Theories of Change

1. Quality of theories of change.
2. Testing and exploration of theories of change.
3. Awareness among stakeholders about theories of change and the learning that results from testing them.

Technical Evidence Base

1. Track the technical evidence base.
2. Apply the technical evidence base in planning and implementation.
3. Contribute to/expand the technical evidence base.



Adapting

Pause & Reflect

1. Variety and purpose of pause & reflect opportunities.
2. Timeliness of pause & reflect opportunities to inform decision-making.
3. Quality of pause & reflect opportunities.

Adaptive Management

1. Analyze learning from implementation and/or pause & reflect opportunities.
2. Inform decision-making.
3. Follow through on decisions reached to manage adaptively.



Culture

Continuous Learning & Improvement

1. Staff take time for learning and reflection.
2. Motivation for learning.
3. Use of iterative approaches that enables continuous improvement.

Openness

1. Sense of comfort in sharing opinions and ideas.
2. Openness to hearing alternative perspectives.
3. Willingness to take action on new ideas.

Utilizing TOCs in Reality

How have you utilized TOCs in your Activity?

What are the challenges in utilizing TOCs throughout the project cycle?



TOCs and MEL Processes - Examples

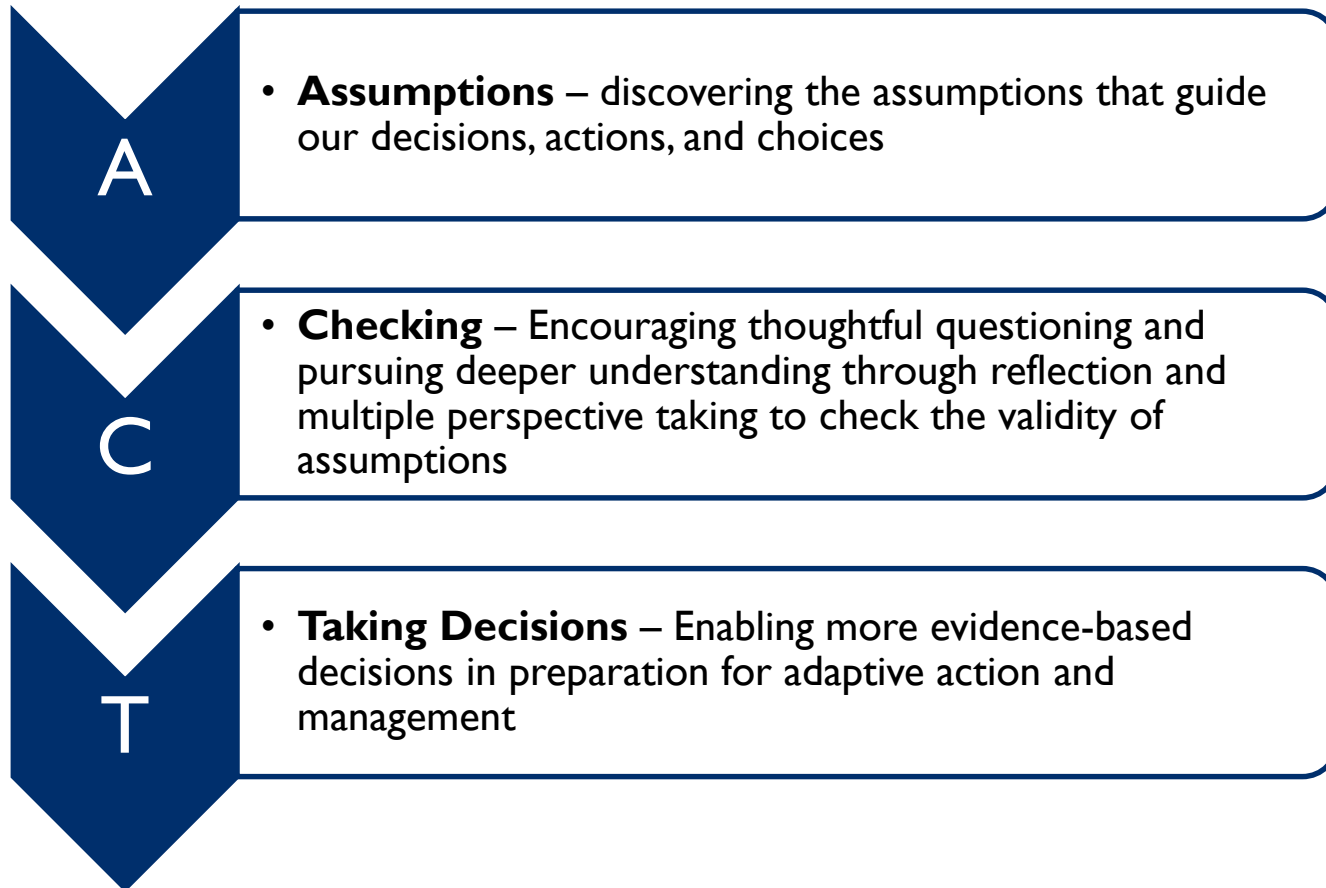
- MEL System Design (including indicator design)
- Focuses MEL activities on most important questions
 - Baseline and other assessment design (test the TOC)
 - Learning questions
 - Spot Check strategy and questions
 - Internal and external evaluations
 - Preparation for evaluations
- Monitoring results help to see if we are on the right track in achieving results laid out in the theory of change
- Monitoring assumptions (programmatic and contextual)

Main Challenges

- Receiving TOCs/AMELPs from proposal phase or previous implementation teams
- Building an evaluative/learning culture
- Embracing and creating space for adaptive management
 - Creating an enabling environment that promotes intentional learning and adaptation
 - Make real adjustments based on learning
 - Finding space within sometimes rigid contracting, management, and reporting systems for flexibility
- Creating space for feedback and data
- Staffing, time, and resources

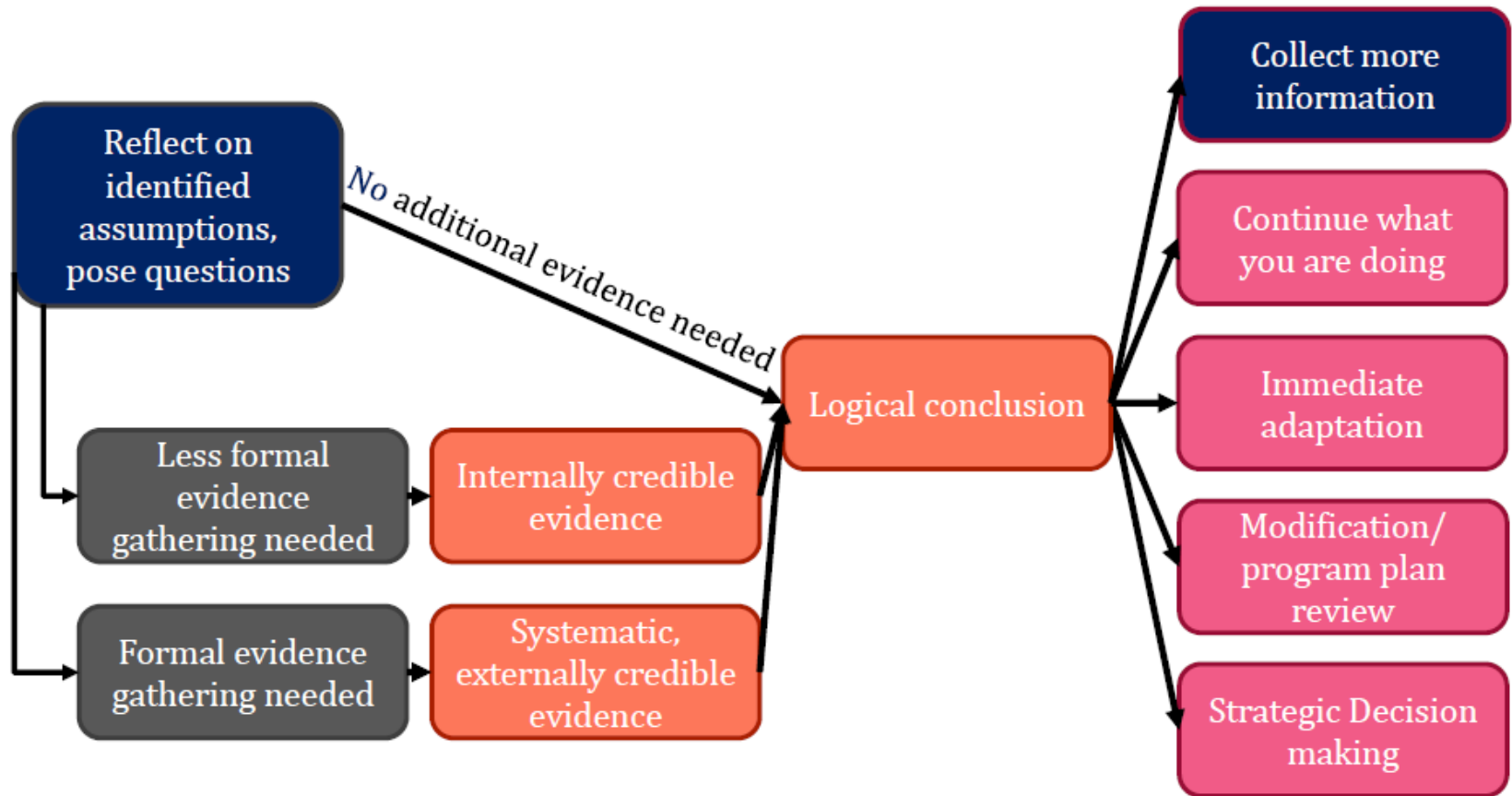
Evaluative Thinking

- Evaluative thinking: a type of reflective practice motivated by an attitude of inquisitiveness and a belief in the value of evidence
- Key to making TOCs useful and for a strong TOC review process



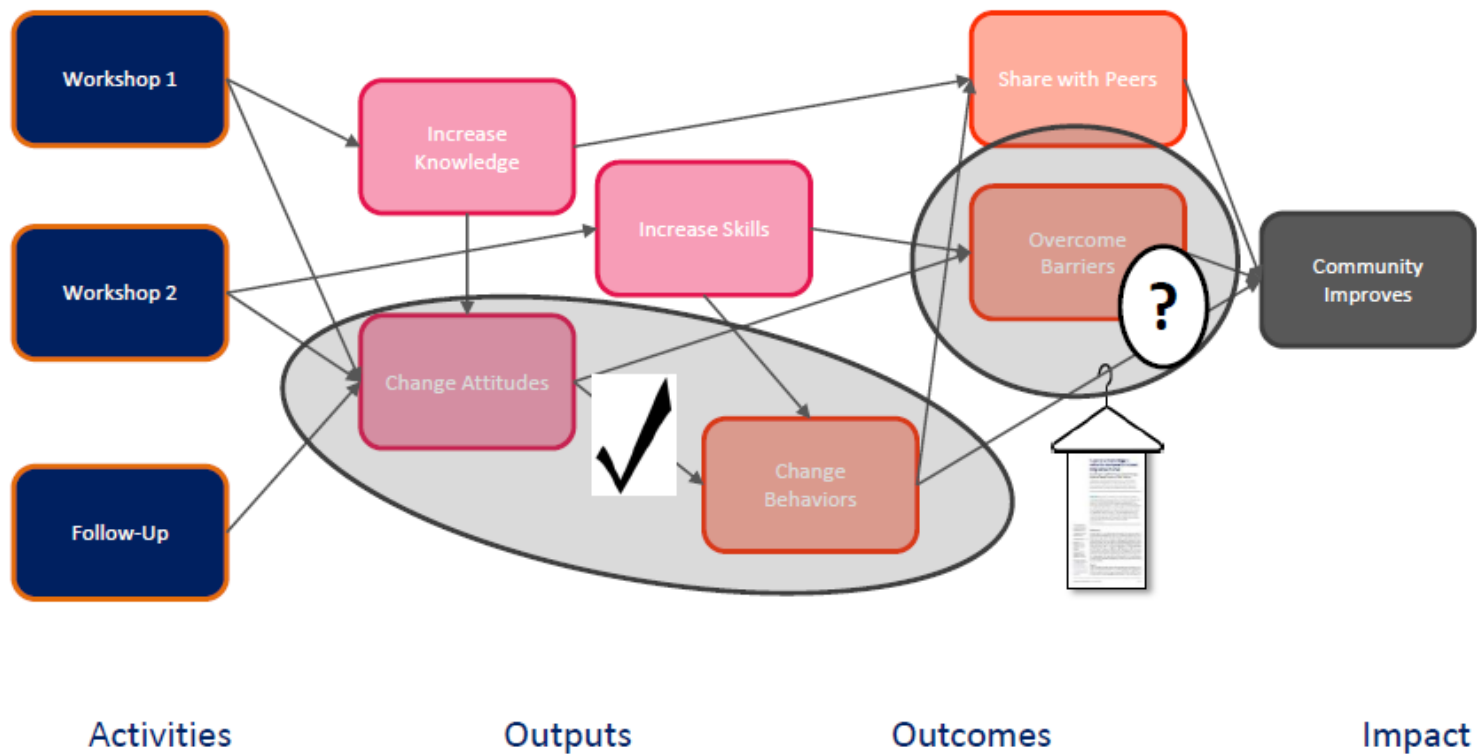
Graphic adapted from Guy Sherrock, Catholic Relief Services, CORE Group M&E Working Group, January 2018.

Evaluative Thinking Process



Source: Guy Sherrock, Catholic Relief Services, CORE Group M&E Working Group presentation, January 2018.

Evaluative Thinking in Action



Source: Guy Sherrock, Catholic Relief Services, CORE Group M&E Working Group presentation, January 2018.

Evaluative Thinking Case Study – CRS

- Created an intentional learning environment
 - Highlight learning from both successes and failures in a positive way
 - Focus staff mee
- Intentionally focus on evaluation thinking in everyday activities
 - Integrate learning questions or questions about assumptions in each monthly meeting
 - Use check-lists focused on assumptions during field visits/activity supervision visits
- Utilize role-play exercises
 - Employ “6 thinking hats” to more deeply analyze project progress or an issue
 - Deliberate use of techniques and tools to review learning and inform decision making
 - Conduct an evaluation simulation
- Engage in critical supportive peer-review
 - Employ the “Critical Conversation Protocol”
 - Encourage learning to action discussion prompts each time data passes hands

Source: Guy Sherrock, Catholic Relief Services, CORE Group M&E Working Group presentation, January 2018.

Overcoming Challenges - Evaluative Thinking

- Start small and keep it simple
 - Work with opportunities as they arise and keep it simple
 - Evaluative thinking takes time to develop and embed
- Leadership and champions motivate and model evaluative thinking practices
 - Provide support to ‘early adopters’ of key practices to encourage wider behavior change
 - Build an environment of trust
- Make space for reflection
 - Schedule regular team reflection and self-evaluation that integrate data
 - To question is not to criticize



Overcoming Challenges

- Identify and “tweak” existing processes to embed and encourage evaluative thinking
 - Project/ Activity kick-off meetings:
 - Are our assumptions still valid?
 - Has anything changed in the context?
 - Introduce more evaluative key questions for Portfolio Reviews, project reviews, annual Activity reviews
 - Integrate TOC reflect time into the annual work planning process
 - Integrate simple check-lists to remind people of critical/evaluative questions
 - Explore ways to maintain linkages between evaluative thinking, M&E, and learning but keep each process manageable
- Tie TOC inquiry to strategic/management decisions and processes
- Explore the feasibility of a Developmental Evaluation approach (embedded evaluator)

Evaluative Thinking Results – CRS

- Better staff engagement
 - Senior project staff proactively seeking wider range of views
 - More ‘level playing field’ for expressing opinions among staff
- Better project participant engagement
 - Greater project participant accountability through check-ins with community members and traditional leadership
- More productive work processes
 - Focus of learning and annual reviews shifting toward critical analysis
 - Deliberate use of techniques and tools to review learning and inform decision making
- More substantive reporting
 - More detailed engagement with monitoring data and use as an “evaluation” tool
 - Greater local contextualization of theories of change
 - Richer reporting by incorporating more perspectives

Source: Guy Sherrock, Catholic Relief Services, CORE Group M&E Working Group presentation, January 2018.

Planning for a Theory of Change Mid-term Review Session



Purpose of the TOC Process

- Why are we doing this?
- What is the intended product of this process?

Purpose	Description	Timeframe
Project/Activity design	Comprehensive, all TOC steps. Usually limited by proposal solicitation period.	Proposal solicitation period; start of implementation
Strategy revision	Revisit TOC to review strategies in response to changes inside and outside the project, new insights, and evidence	Tied to strategy implementation period (USAID: 5 years)
Quality review of existing project/Activity	Improve program quality, revisit assumptions, make implicit assumptions explicit, sharpen strategies	Mid-term
Strategic learning or “pause and reflect” moment	Define or review learning questions; build evidence base around current strategies, support adaptive management	Annual or as determined by the project/ Activity
Evaluation	Examine effectiveness; often reconstructs TOC	Mid-term, end-term, ex-post
Scaling up or out	Analysis of suitability and feasibility of scaling up or out a project, need for adaptation of the TOC; review and test assumptions in the new context	During implementation
Collaborative and collective MEL in a multi-actor initiative	Develop joint strategic approach and collective MEL framework and learning agenda, with clear and agreed roles and responsibilities of each actor involved	Start of consortium or network cooperation

Adapted from HiVOS

Periodic TOC Review

- Pause and reflect moment
 - Conducted at a specific or critical point in time during implementation
 - Aligned with decision-making and planning cycles
 - Informed by existing performance monitoring data and implementation knowledge and experience
- Format
 - Workshop
 - Group discussion
 - Series of small group discussions
 - Combination of multiple formats depending on time

Strong TOC Process to Encourage Utilization

- Clear purpose and use for the TOC process
- High quality TOC process is implemented
 - Process is fit-for-purpose
 - Process is inclusive, interactive, discussed-based, and open
 - Grounded in context
- Process results in greater understanding collective ownership of the TOC
- Process is seen as useful and not a burden on staff
- TOC product is never seen as final

TOC Process Planning Considerations

- Review the TOC in depth before the session
- Focus the review:
 - What questions are most important for the project?
 - Are there unexpected trends in our M&E data?
 - Has something recently changed in the context?
 - What decision would this process support?
- **Strong facilitation is key** to encourage and instil evaluative thinking
 - Probe assumptions: context, people, change, evidence
- Ensure the process and products are useful (purpose-driven)
 - What benefits do we expect the process will bring us?
 - What do we expect the TOC process to produce?
 - What does that mean for the design of the process and level of depth on which we focus?

TOC Process Planning Considerations

- Who needs to be involved in the process and why?
 - What level of review will be undertaken and who can most effectively contribute to that level of discussion?
- How much time do I have?
- How can we best engage participants to strengthen evaluative/TOC thinking throughout the process?
- How can the timing of the review fit with decision-making cycles?
- If changes to our TOC are seen as necessary, what types of changes are possible?
 - Contractually
 - Stage of project/Activity implementation

Common Pitfalls – TOC Reviews

- Lack of participation and leadership support
 - TOCs are reflected on/only updated by M&E staff
 - Technical staff are not involved in reviewing or are not aware of the TOC and its meaning
- Process is not focused or fit-for-purpose or produce useful products
- Process not tied to decision-making cycle
 - e.g. TOC review occurs after annual work plan is approved or outside of the regular funding cycle processes
- Insufficient time allocated to the process
- Facilitator does not effectively probe to unearth assumptions
- TOCs/logic models updated but not the work plan
- TOCs are updated and finalized without discussion with your AOR/CORs
 - Any resulting changes from TOC reviews or updates to the program logic or strategy should be discussed with and approved by your AOR

TOC Review – Group Work Step 1

- Read the TOC Case Study
- In groups, review the TOC narrative and visual using the TOC review rubric
 - Group Discussion:
 - What major findings emerged?
 - What could be done to strengthen this TOC?
- Choose one specific element to be the focus of a mock TOC review session. Examples include:
 - A set of assumptions within one result
 - Evidence-base related to the TOC overall or a single result
 - Causal logic gap within 1 result or between higher level results
 - Updating 1 result based on changes in the context
- Time: 30 minutes

Energizer Activity



Facilitation

What is good facilitation?

What does a good facilitator do?



Facilitation Principles

- Facilitator is a guide to help people move through a process together
 - Not a seat of wisdom and knowledge
 - Facilitators draw out opinions and ideas of group members
- Facilitators are NOT present to give their own opinions
- Facilitation focuses on *how* people participate in the process of learning or planning, not just on *what* gets achieved
- A facilitator is neutral and never takes sides

Facilitation Guidance

- Design and execute a session to ensure everyone feels comfortable participating
 - Establish ground rules for the session
 - Develop a structure that allows for everyone's ideas to be heard
 - Ensure the group feels the ideas and decisions are theirs, not just the leader's
- Thoroughly understand the goals of the meeting and the organization
- Ask about the group's expectations
- Keep the group on the agenda and moving forward
- Involve everyone in the session: draw out quiet participants, control domineering participants
- Ensure decisions are made democratically
- Ensure the logistics and room arrangements are conducive to good participation

Community Tool Box, <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/group-facilitation/facilitation-skills/main>

Brainstorming

- Brainstorming is an ideal tool for generating a large quantity of ideas within the group. However, for effective brainstorming sessions:
 - Ideas should flow freely
 - Aim for quantity, not quality of ideas
 - Record every idea clearly
 - Do not criticize or evaluate ideas in the session
 - Consider an independent facilitator to the group
 - In addition, the facilitator should also encourage the team to come up with several ‘off the wall’ or ‘wacky’ ideas. These can often stimulate the ideal solution.

Energizers

- Energizers are ideal to raise personal energy levels within the group. Use these, where necessary, at appropriate intervals throughout the day, to revitalize the group. You can build up your repertoire of energizers by reviewing training manuals, sharing ideas with colleagues and thinking up your own.
- The key principles of using energizers are:
 - They should be fun and uplifting
 - Make them short e.g. five minutes
 - Conduct them with sufficient space
 - To be mindful of any potential health and safety hazards e.g. no chairs or equipment in the way
 - They are not physically too demanding and that everyone in the group will be able to participate

Six Thinking Hats

- This tool encourages a group to look at a situation from a new angle.
- Each 'hat' represents a different way of looking at something.
- There are a number of ways to do this exercise. For example, individuals within the group can wear different hats whilst the group discusses an issue. Another alternative is that everyone in the group can try on one of the 'thinking hats' for a while, then everyone can put on another one.



Facilitator Tips

- Don't memorize a script
- Watch the group's body language
- Always check back with the group
- Summarize and pause
- Be aware of your own behavior
- Stay in your facilitator role
- Ensure you have the buy-in of power players/leadership in the room
- Ensure your speech does not alienate any one in the room
- For a TOC Session:
 - probe to unearth hidden assumptions by asking people to specify or qualify what has been said
 - ask questions around context, people, and change

Group Exercise: Facilitation Skills Building

- Six Hats Exercise
- In your groups, brainstorm reasons and dynamics behind these assumptions:
 - School drop-outs who receive training for available positions (guards, receptionist, etc.) will be employed
 - Women's health is mainly an issue that involves women.
 - Economic development in underserved areas of Jordan will reduce the risk of violent extremism.
 - If women are well trained and have the skills they will be hired by local businesses.
 - If the quality of teaching improves, student learning will improve
- For each question, individuals should choose a hat, a perspective to take on to answer the question.
 - For each question, group members should switch hats.
 - Ensure each group member has a chance to be the “blue hat” facilitator.
- Time: 40 minutes

Practical Exercise: Facilitating a TOC Review Session

- In groups, design a facilitated exercise to review and strengthen one element within the TOC case study that your group selected in the last exercise
 - Your planned exercise should last no more than 20 minutes
 - The audience/participants for your exercise is the rest of the class who will role play as “the project team”
 - Ensure your chosen exercise
- Be sure to a
 - What is the specific goal of the session?
 - How will it be useful to the team?
 - How will you structure the session?
 - How will you set-up the room?
 - What facilitation method(s) will you use?
- Time: 1 hour to plan, 30 minutes to facilitate

TOC Training Closing, Post-Test, Evaluation

