



# Think Future No.2

Exploring Theories of Change as a practical means to communicate impact narratives to a range of stakeholders

**G:ENESIS**  
UNLOCKING VALUE

# Agenda

- 1** *Introduction* 10 min
- 2** *Theory of change and results chains* 25 min
- 3** *Indicators* 15 min
- 4** *Exercise* 20 min
- 5** *Measuring impact: attribution vs contribution* 20 min

# Introductory questions...

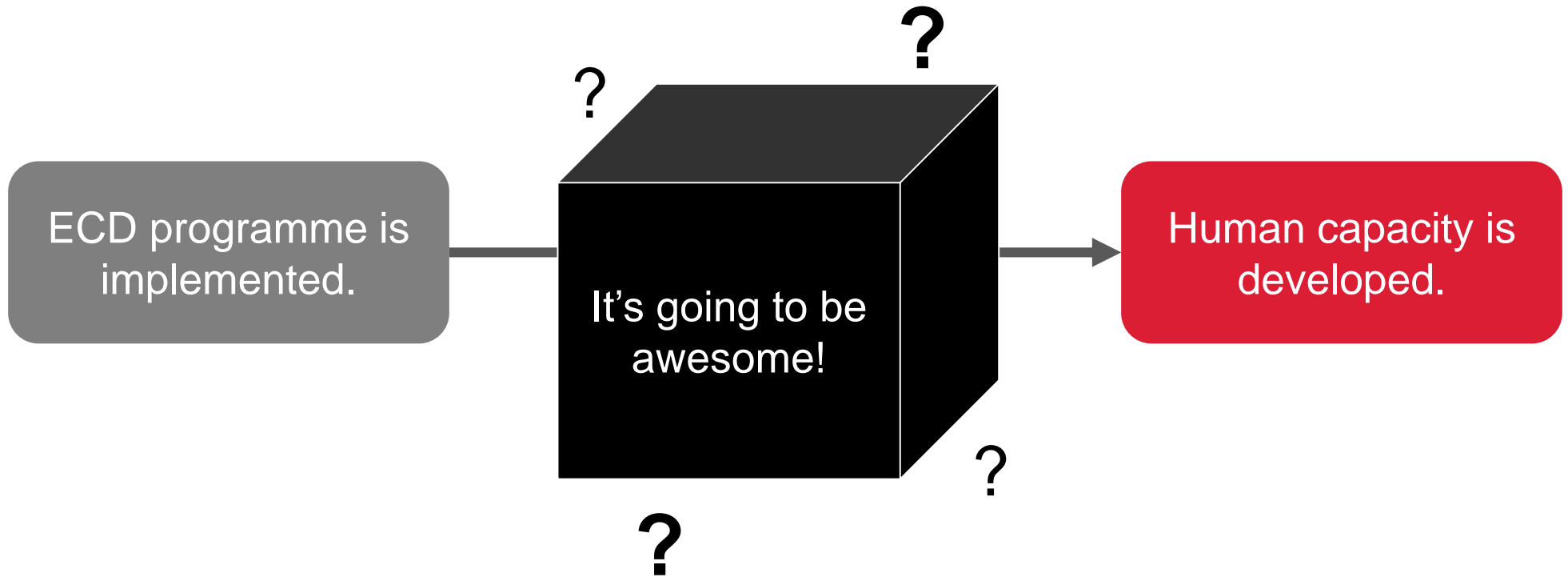
What type of impact do you hope to achieve?

Why is measuring impact important for you/your organisation?

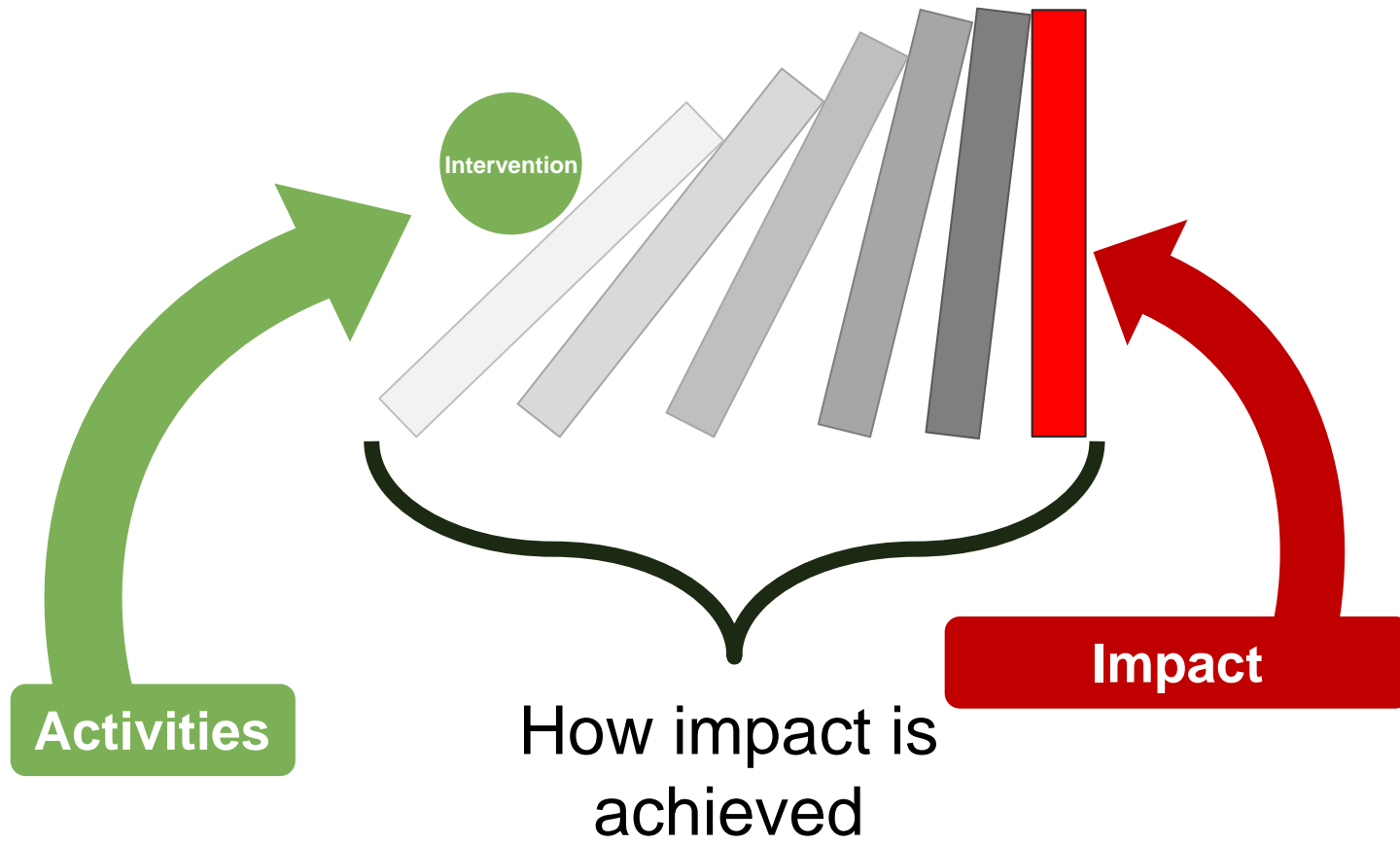
How do we  
plan to  
**achieve**  
**impact?**



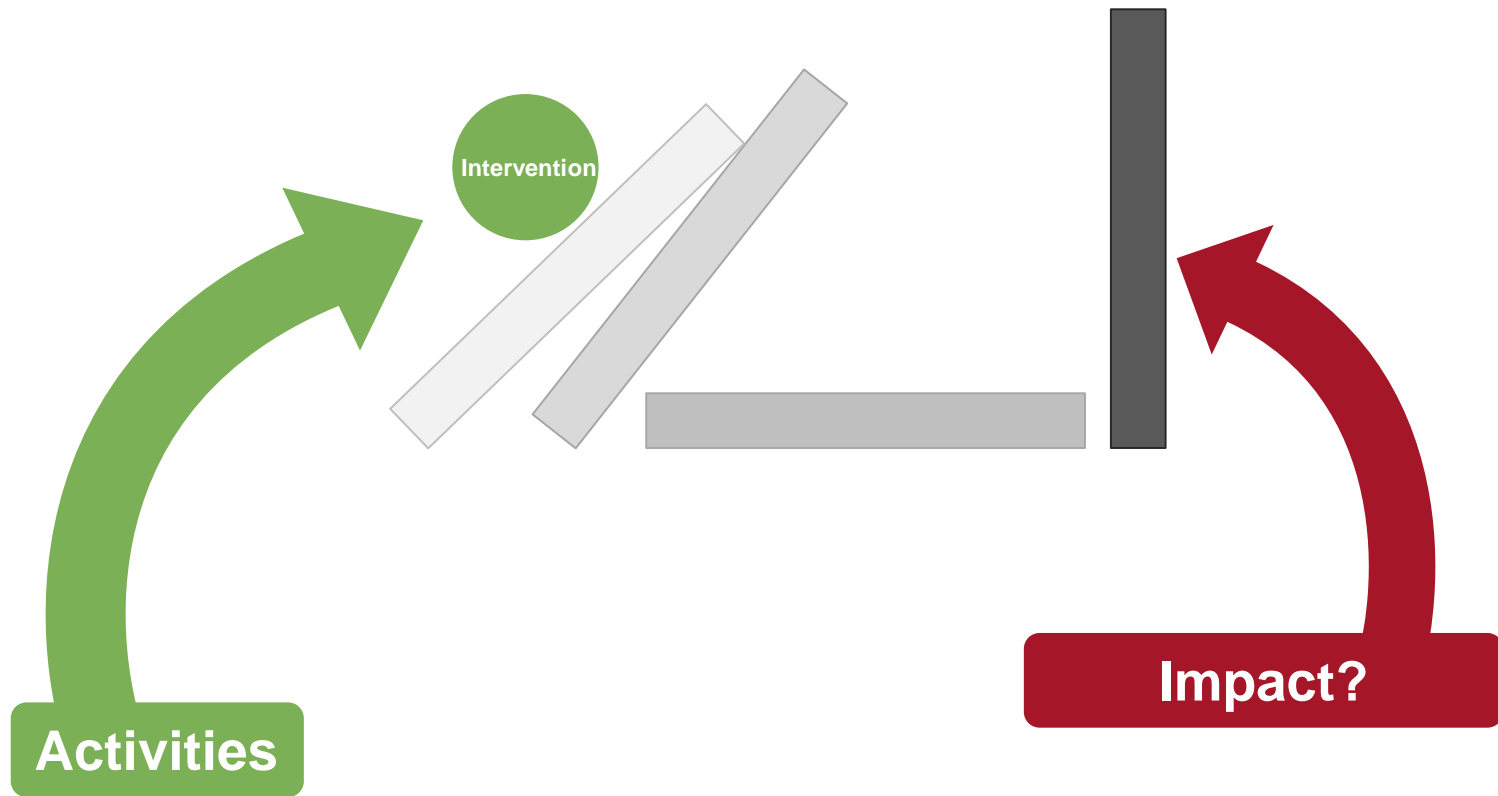
# The big black box of impact



# Theory of change



# Theory of change



# Results chain

## What is a results chain?

- A visual tool to show what a programme is doing and why.
- Results chains are not only M&E tools – can be used for visioning and strategic planning

## What is the difference between a results chain and a theory of change?

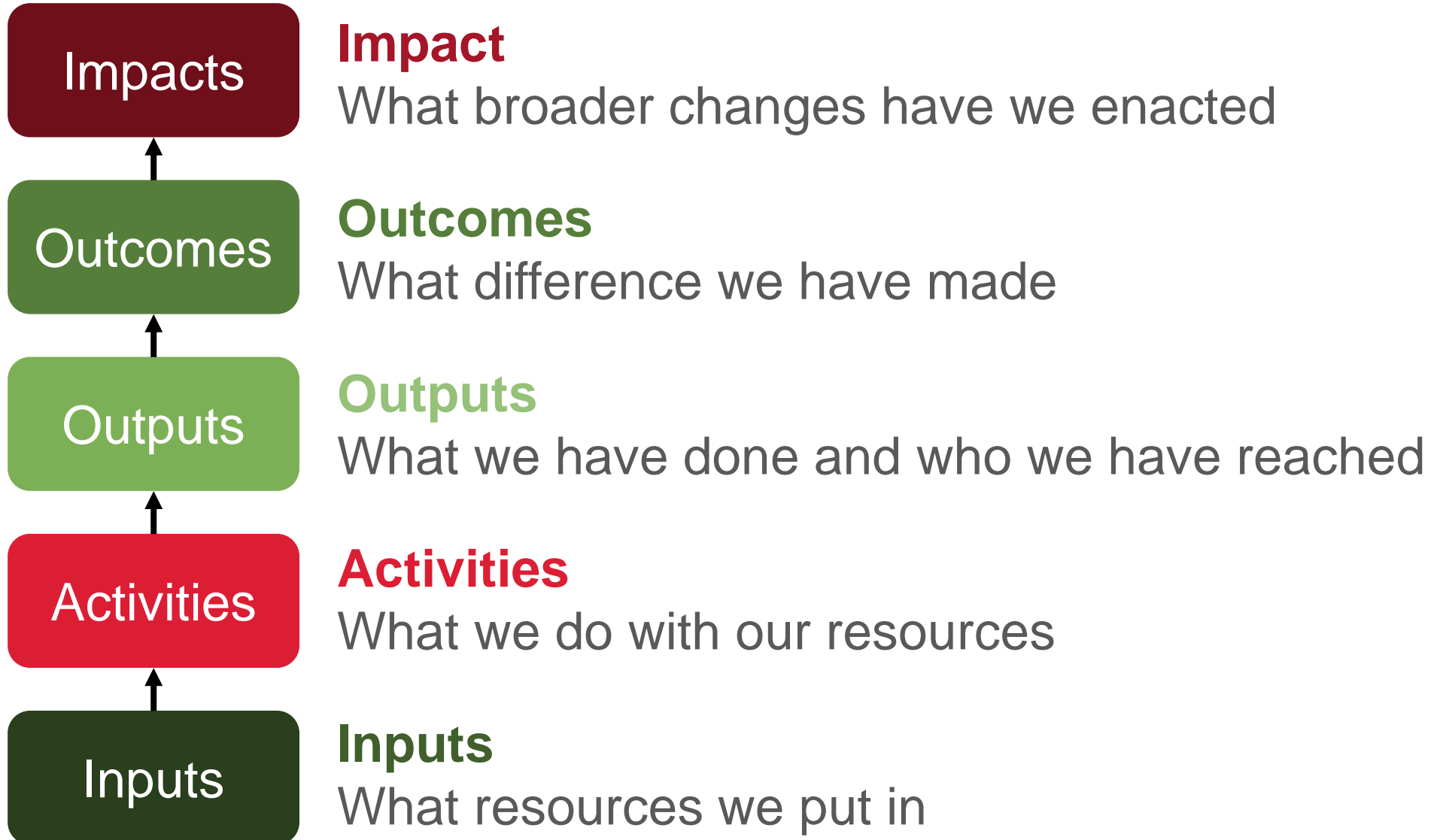
- The theory of change (TOC) is the theory that explains the project logic
- A results chain is the visual depiction of the theory

## A theory of change forms the heart of an impact measurement system

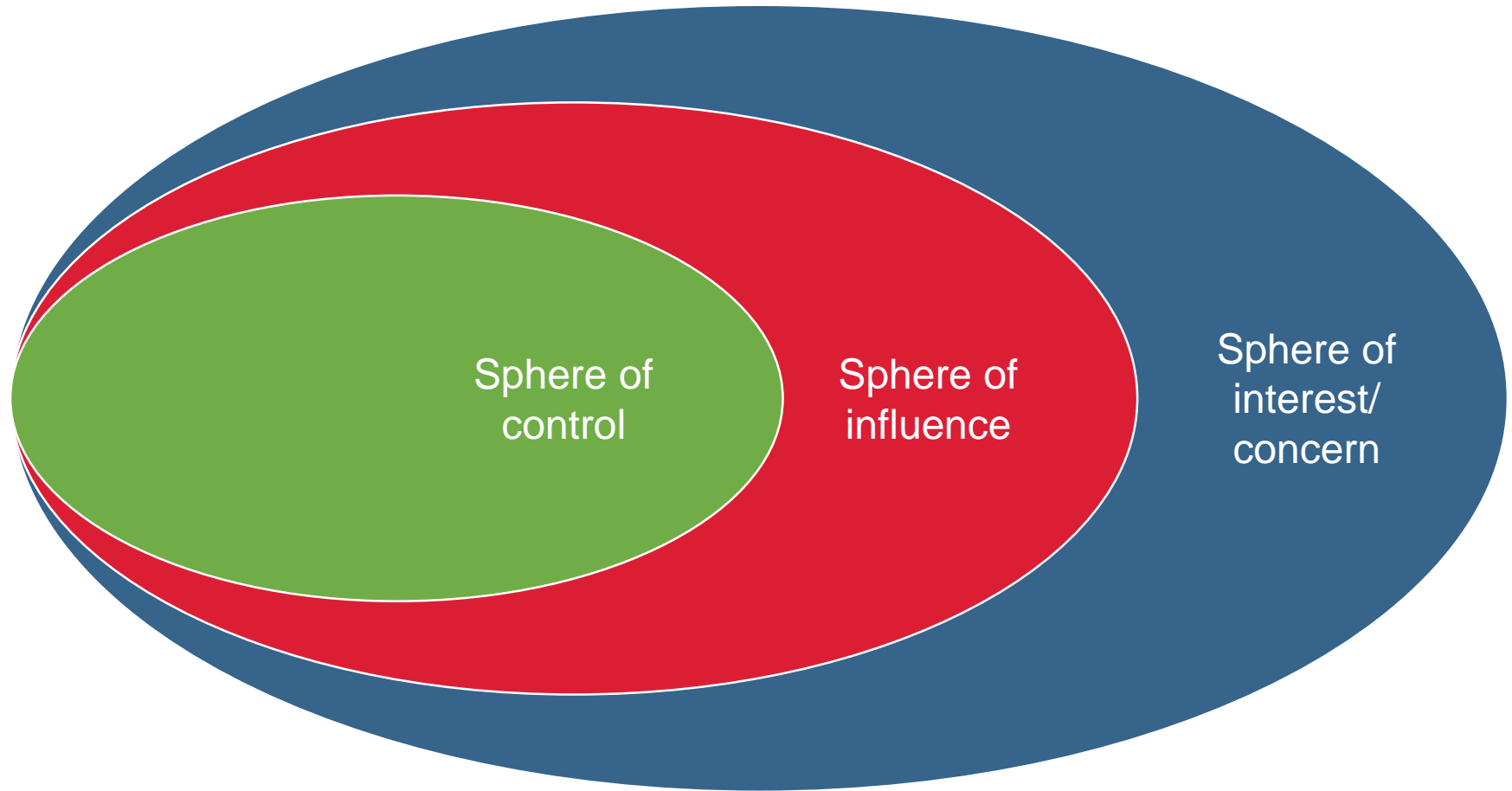
- All indicators are based on each box in the chain
- If the logic is incorrect, you may measure the wrong things



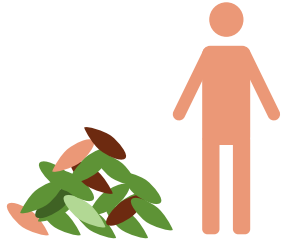
# Results chain



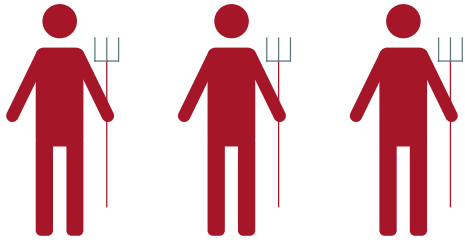
# Another way to think about it...



# An example...



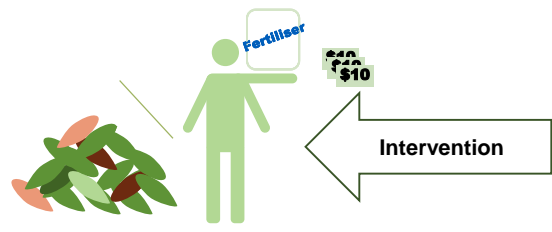
Individuals with access to compost

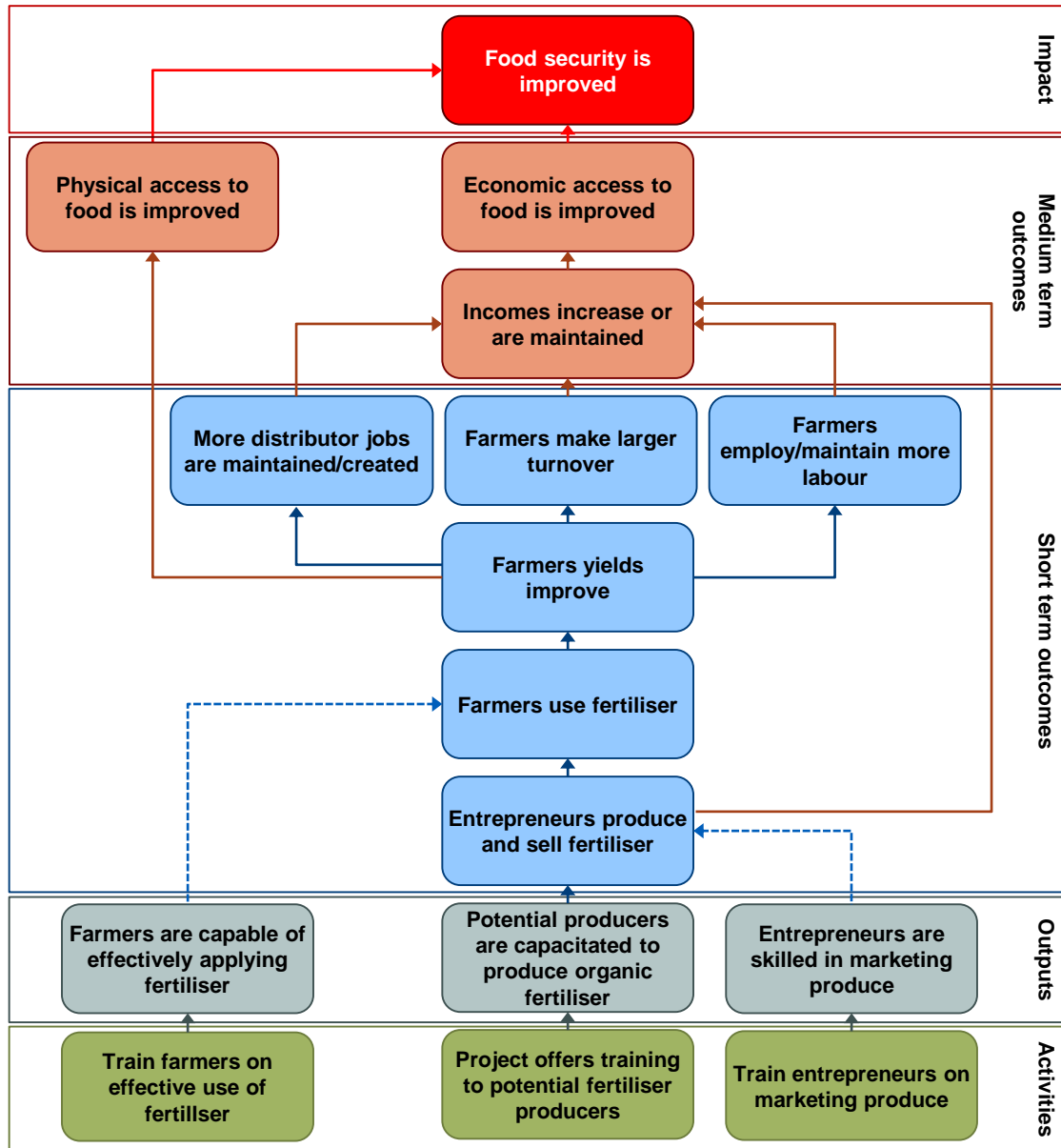


Farmers with low yields due to poor fertilisation



Isolated community





# Assumptions

“a thing that is **accepted as true** or as certain to happen, **without proof.**”

**Often forgotten about, always the deal-breaker.**

**Logical** Do all steps in the results chain lead to the next?

**External** What factors may prevent one step from leading to the next?



Both a  
**process**  
and a  
**product**

# Results chains have many **benefits:**



- Promotes a strong **open, adaptive learning** culture
- **Simple** and **easy** means to communicate an investment's impact objectives internally and externally
- Assists **decision-making** processes, including selection of investments
- **Enables tracking** of the progress of the investment, **assists with reporting** externally
- **Enables alignment** between stakeholders

## But **beware:**



- **Oversimplification** can limit relevance
- **Overly complicated results chains** can limit use and can be costly
- **Corresponding indicators** may be hard to develop



# Questions for discussion

Who should create a TOC / results chain?

How often do you think TOCs should be used/revisited in project management?

How do we measure  
**progress** towards  
objectives?

# indicators

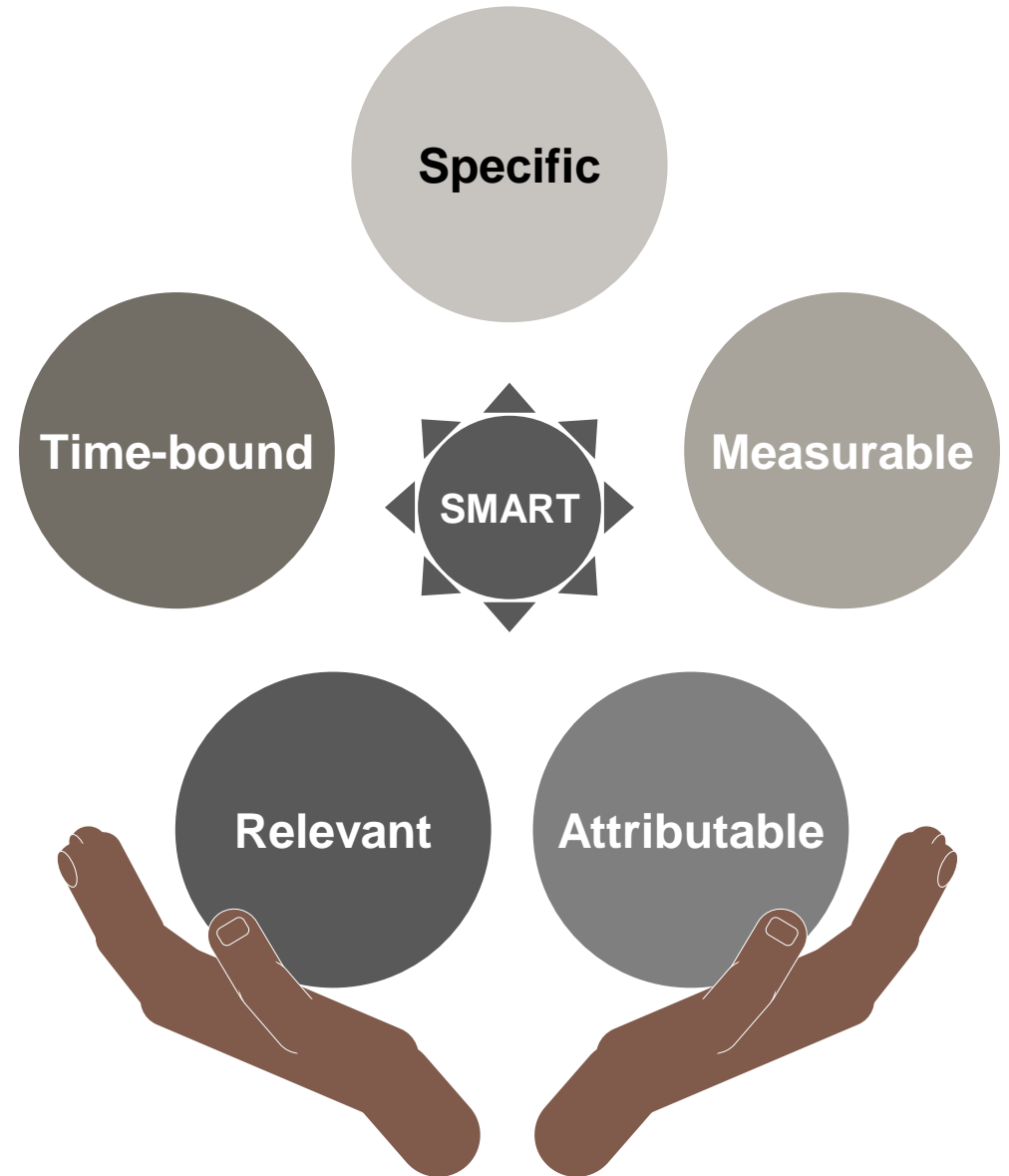


# What should an **indicator** do?

## **Answer these:**

- Are changes happening and to what extent?
- How and why are the changes happening?
- Are the changes sustainable?

# The **Holy Grail** of indicators



# Examples of tools for measurement

**Observation**

**Secondary  
sources**

**MIS data**

**Surveys**

**Focus group  
discussions**

**Key informant  
interviews**

**Case studies**

**Participatory  
approaches**

# Measurement plans

## What?

**Which indicators are you measuring at the specified point in time?**

## How?

**What measurement tool will be used?**

## When?

**When and how frequently will this indicator be measured?**

## Who?

**Who is responsible for measuring this indicator?**

# Data collection

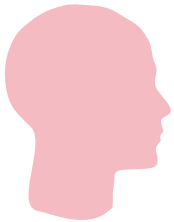
## Things to consider:

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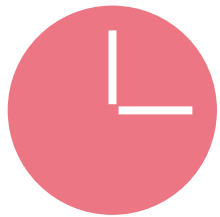
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Quantitative – e.g. Surveys, knowledge tests, registers



Qualitative – e.g. Interviews, focus group discussions

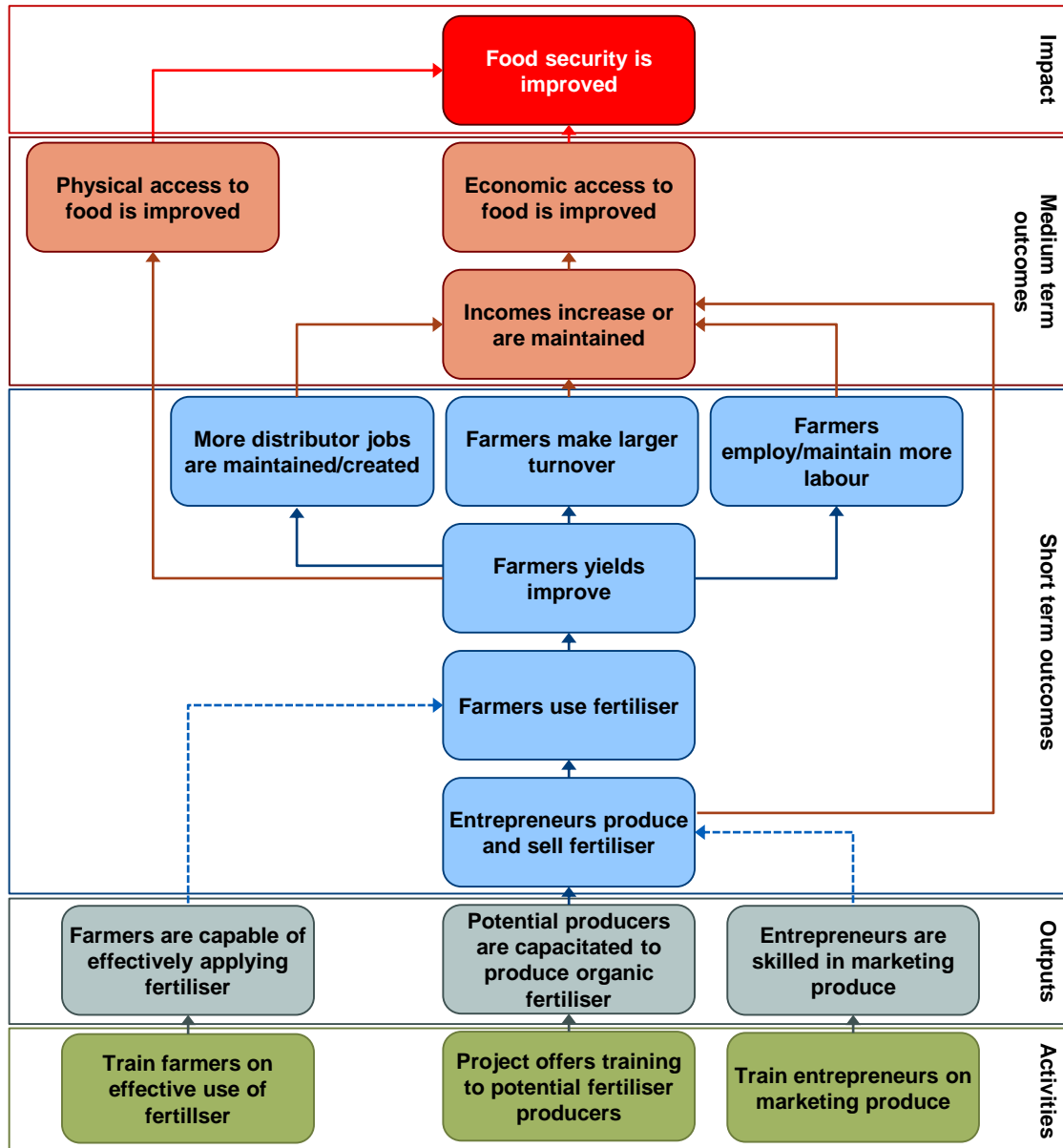


Timing – Before, during, after implementation?



# exercise





# How do we measure impact?

## Attribution

- Deals with causality
- Uses techniques to estimate the outcomes under the counterfactual
- Experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental

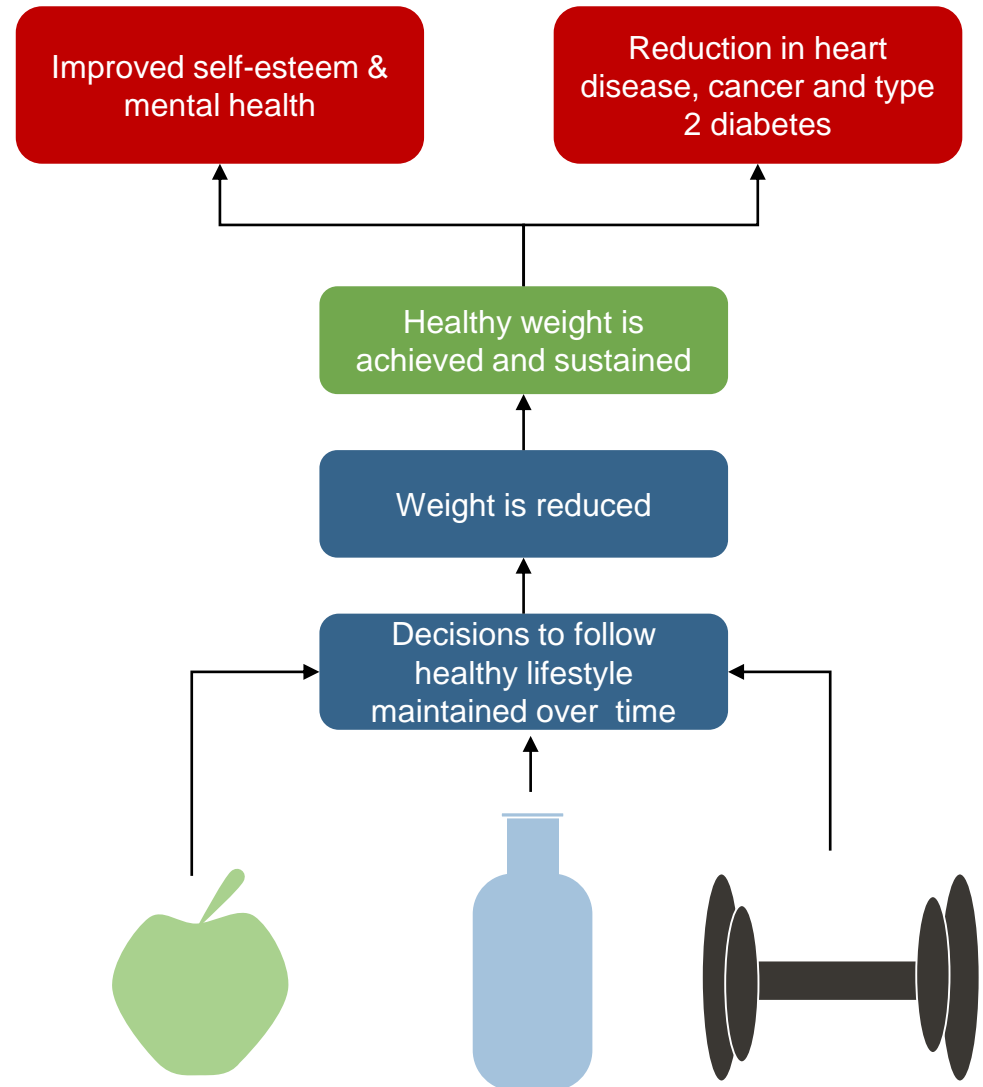
**VS**

## Contribution

- Builds a contribution narrative
- Not necessarily quantitative
- Theory-based

# Attribution

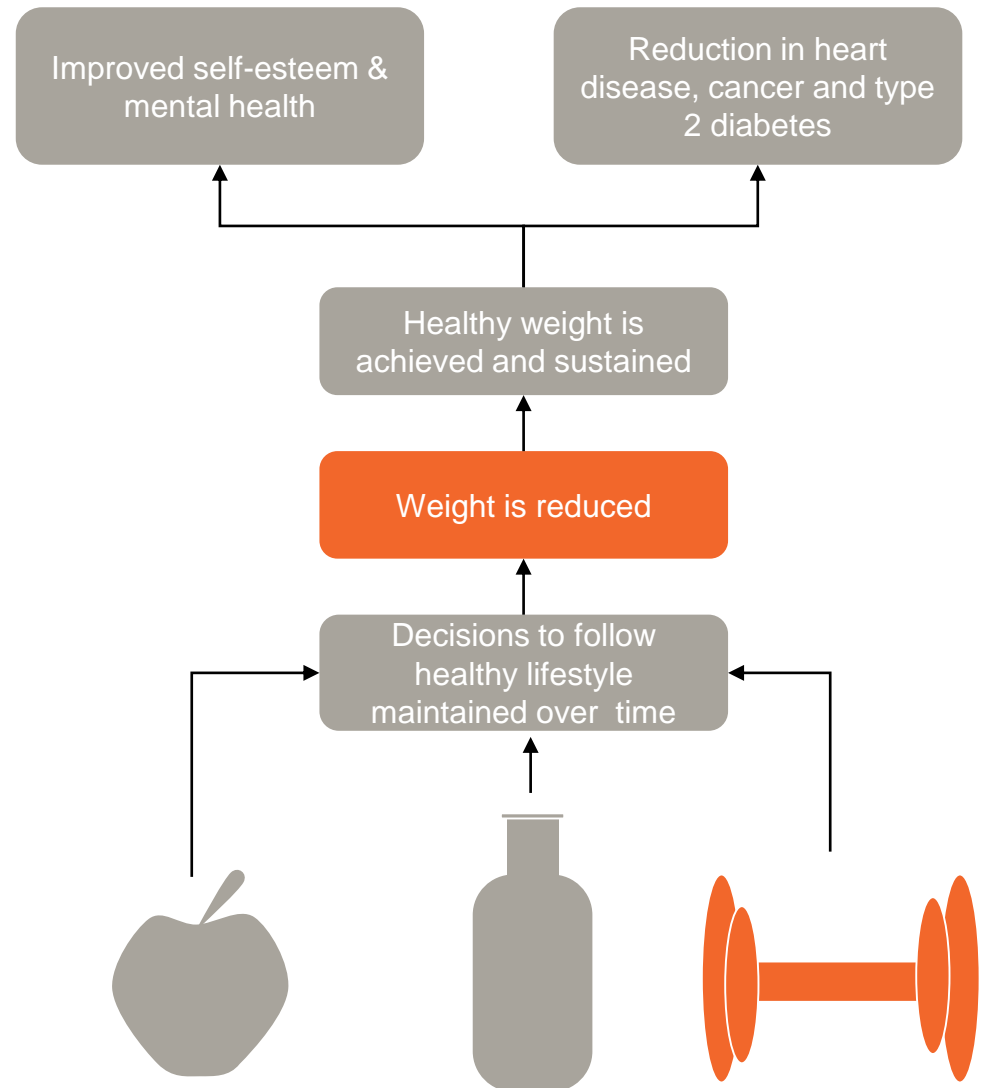
**Attribution** narrative:



# Attribution

## Attribution narrative:

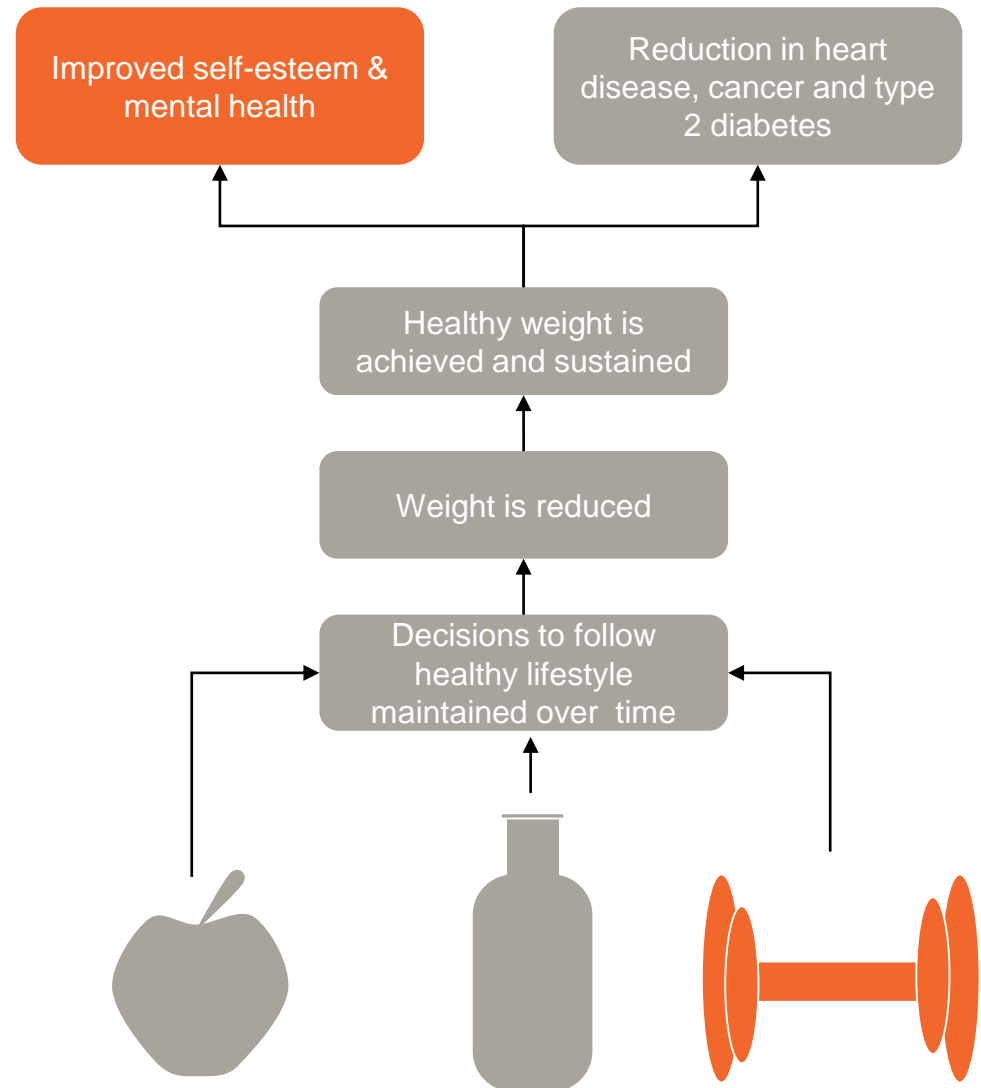
- All else held constant, this exercise intervention has resulted in an average weight loss of 12.5kg or 18% over the period.
- This finding is statistically significant at the 5% level and is representative to the population.



# Attribution

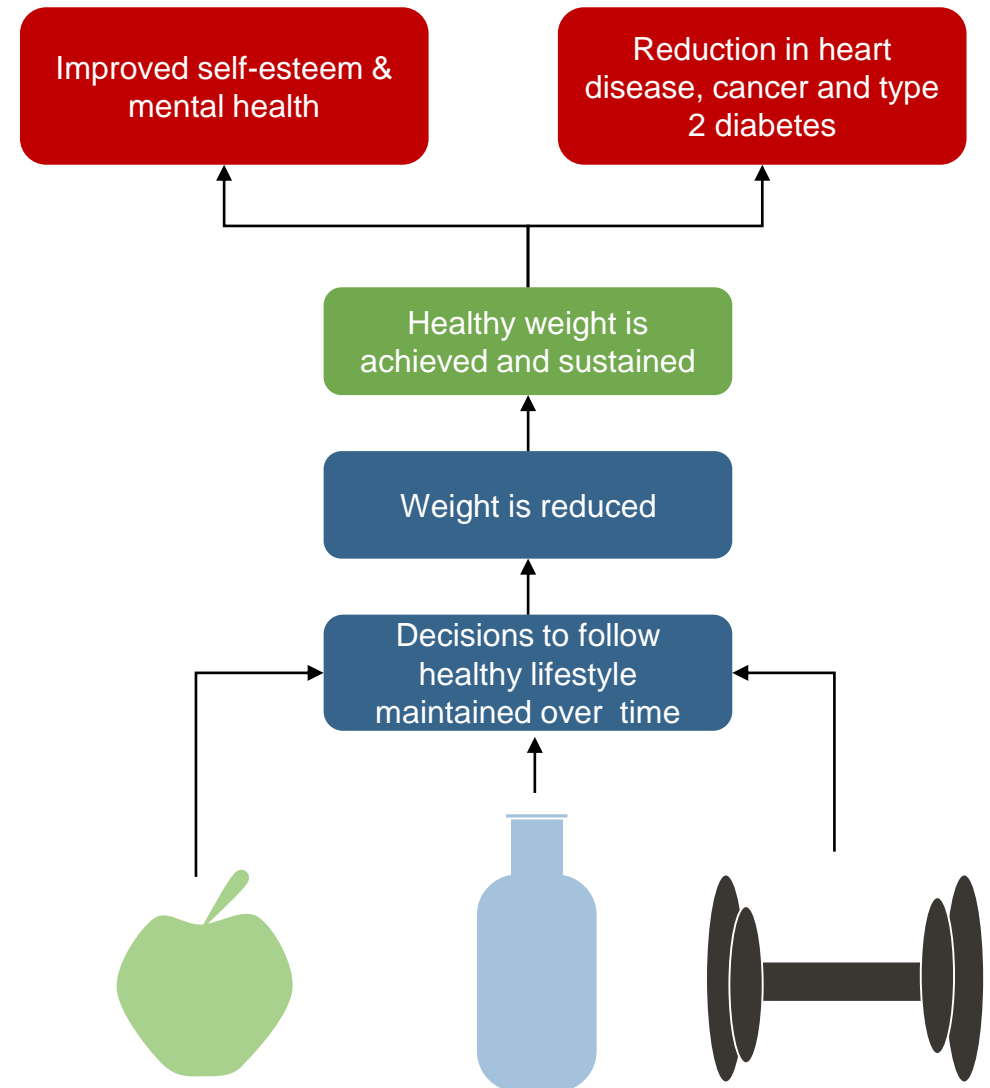
## Attribution narrative:

- We find that the intervention did not lead to any statistically significant change in mental health and self-esteem among treatment participants as compared to the control group.

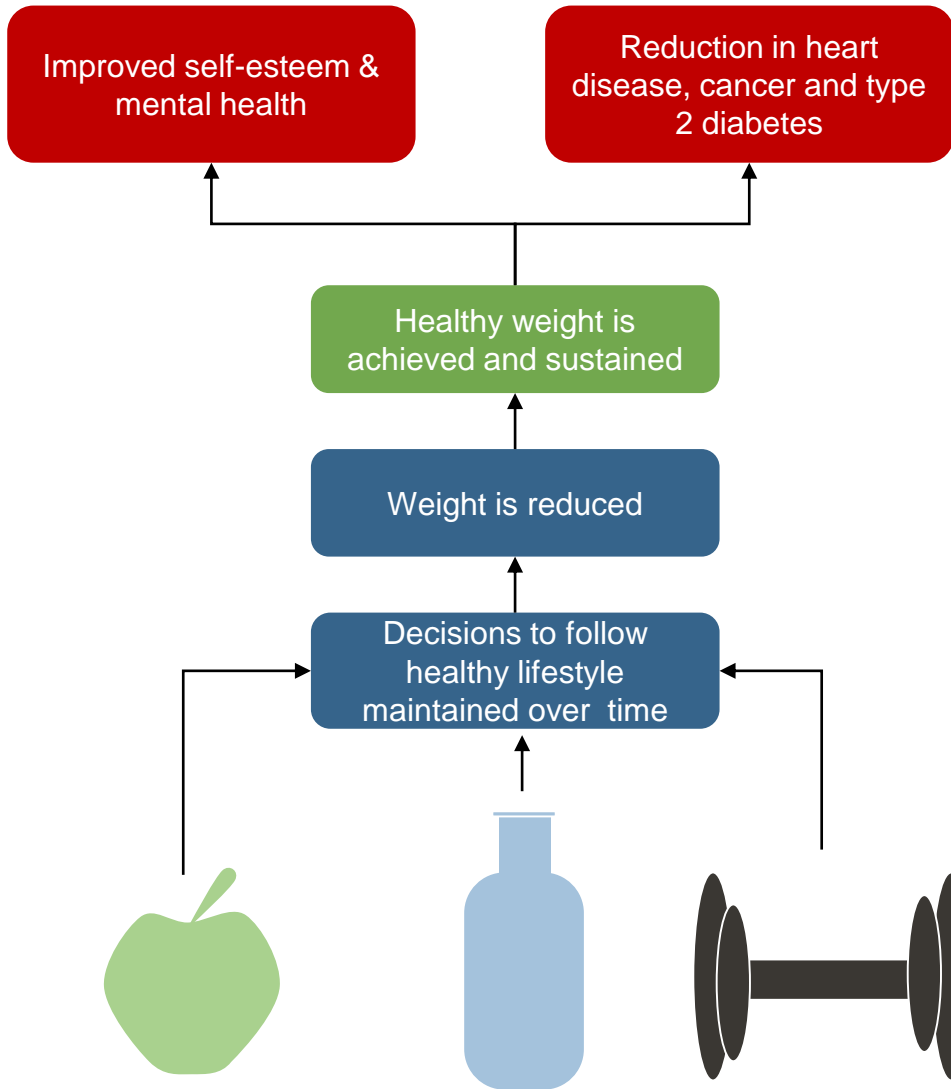


# Contribution

**Contribution** narrative:



# Contribution

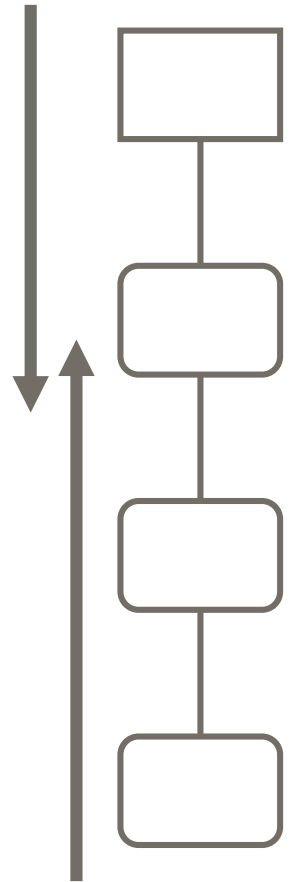


## Top down:

- Sector/group-level changes
- System affects
- New players, crowding in/copying
- Impact and outcome level mainly

## Bottom up:

- Changes resulting due to the programme
- Activity, output and direct outcome changes

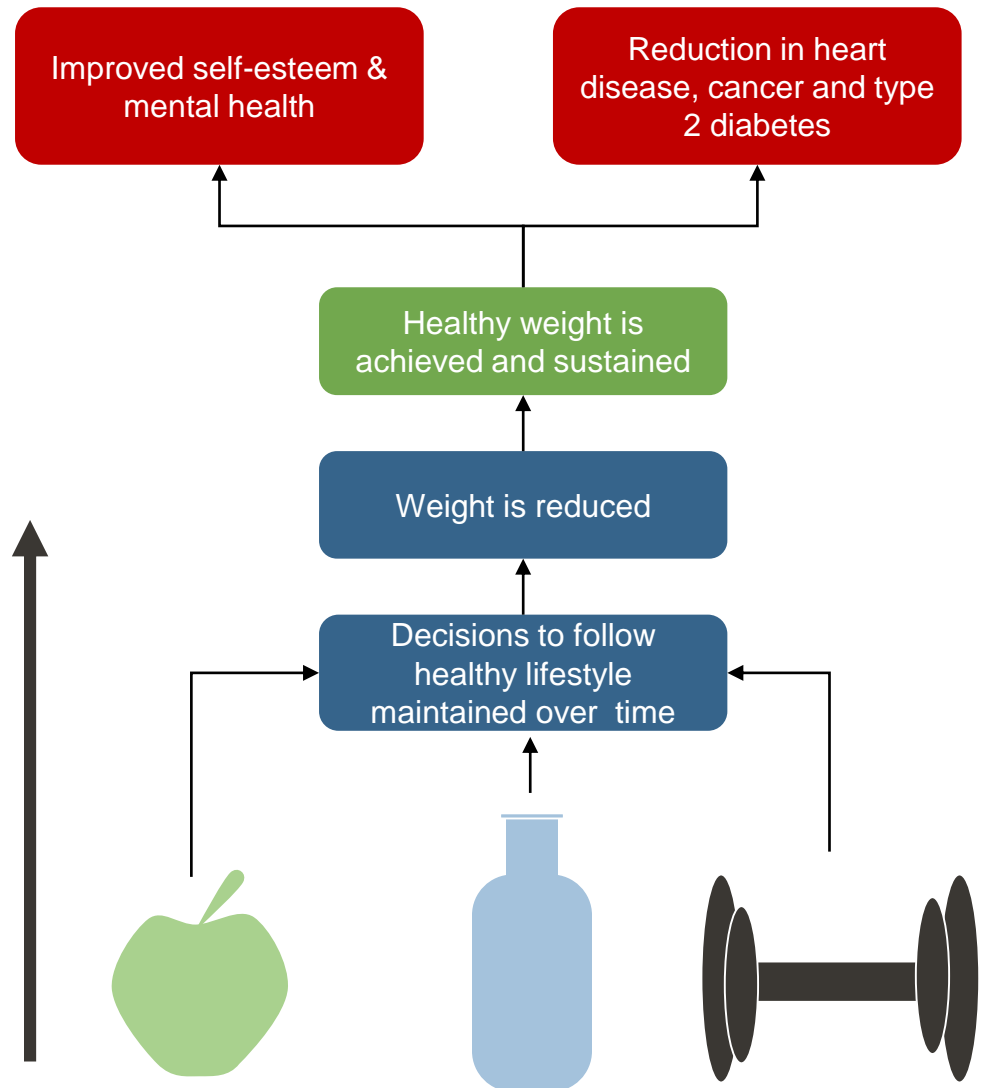




# Contribution

## Contribution narrative:

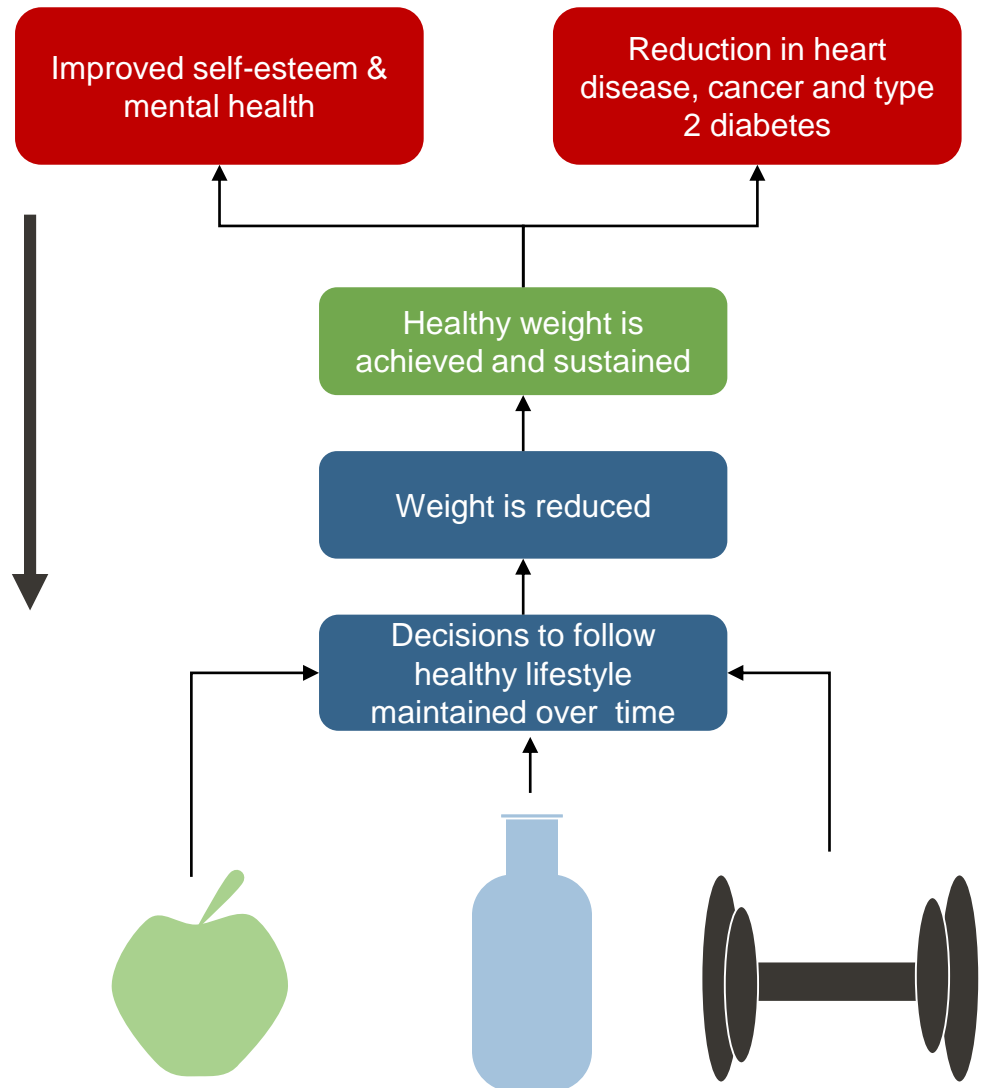
- Theory has shown that exercise, together with healthy eating and increased water consumption, will assist weight loss
- FGD participants have reported that they find the changes to their exercise regime to be the largest lifestyle change and eating/drinking has remained similar.
- On average, the sample of participants measured between 10 - 20kg weight loss.
- Our TOC and the literature supports the conclusion that changes to exercise have contributed between 60-80% to weight loss, this programme has then assisted individuals to lose between 6kg -16kg



# Contribution

## Contribution narrative:

- In South Africa, data shows that heart disease has actually increased by 20% between 2010 and 2016.
- The medical literature has shown that heart disease is improved when individuals are of a sustained healthy weight. But there are still other causes of heart disease, including family histories.
- The programme has reported 6kg- 16kg weight loss, but only 10% of participants have reached a healthy weight. Heart disease reduction through this programme is occurring in less 10% the beneficiaries.
- Focus groups indicate beneficiaries are choosing to take-away alternatives, detracting from the exercise gains. New fast food players have entered into the market and have driven down prices compared to the healthy alternatives.



# Reflections

What are your key takeaways from this session?

**Thank you**