THEORY OF CHANGE

Kigali, Rwanda

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ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL
Poverty Action Lab

TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO ACTION

Outline

1. Introduction to theory of change
2. Building a theory of change in 7 steps

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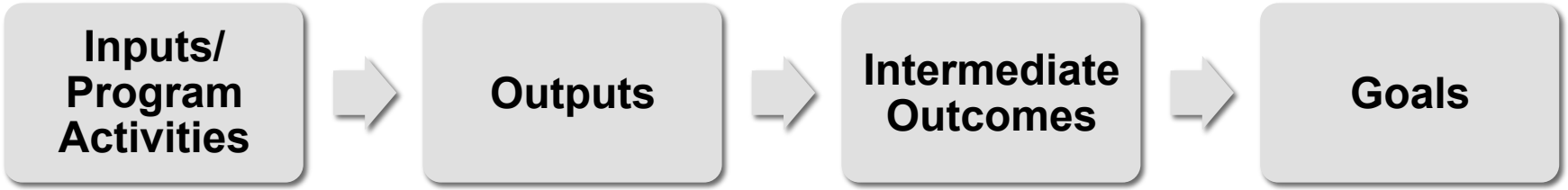
Theory of Change (ToC)

- Definition
  - Theory of change is an on-going process of reflection to explore change and how it happens – and what that means in a particular context, sector, and/or group of people.

- Theory of Change thinking
  - Structured way of thinking about change and impact organizations would like to achieve
  - Integrated approach to program design, implementation, M+E, and communication

Theory of Change Levels



Program components
e.g. teach, offer loans, deliver food

Resources
e.g. staff, funds, equipment, food

Tangible products or services produced as a result of the activities

Take-up by offered participants.

e.g. # school children receiving school meals

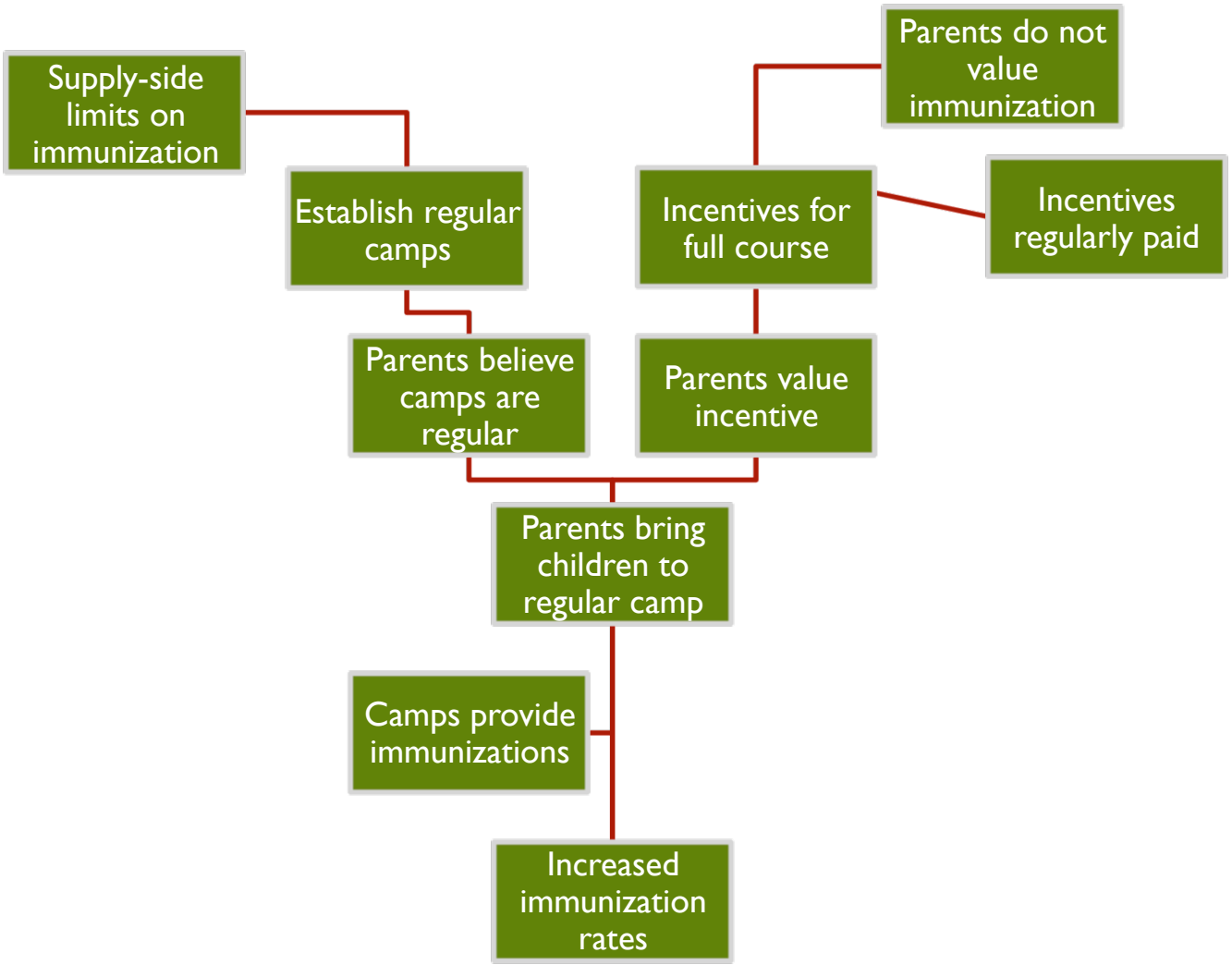
Short-term behavioral changes that result from the outputs

e.g. more children attend school and concentrate better in class

Long-term changes that result from outcomes

e.g. improved learning leads to better socio economic outcomes

Theory of Change example: Increasing immunizations



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7 Steps to Building a Theory of Change

1. Situation analysis
2. Clarify the program goal
3. Design the program/product
4. Map the causal pathway
5. Explicit assumptions
6. Design SMART indicators
7. Convert to Logical Framework

Step 1: Situation/context analysis

- What it is:
  - Identifying target market segment (beneficiaries)
  - Needs, opportunities, barriers to progress
  - Map relevant stakeholders
  - Analyze broader political and economic context

- Purpose:
  - Design the right product, identify markers for success

Step 1: Situation/context analysis

Cookstoves example

- High indoor air pollution
  - Use of traditional cook stoves and solid fuels
  - Lack of access to improved cook stoves
  - Improved cook stoves are expensive
- Poor health outcomes
  - People inhale high levels of smoke
  - No exhaust systems

Building a TOC – Step 1: Situation Analysis

Situation/Context Analysis: Polluting stoves, smoke inhalation, poor health

Step 2: Clarify Program Goals

- Decrease usage of solid fuels
- Reduce indoor air pollution
  - Get households to use improved stoves
  - Reduce the smoke the cook and other members of the household inhaled
- Improve health outcomes
  - Less asthma, lung infections
  - Improve health of all household members

Building a TOC – Step 2: Clarify Program Goals

GOAL

Health outcomes improve

Situation/Context Analysis: Polluting stoves, smoke inhalation, poor health

Step 3: Design the program

- Subsidize cost of improved cook stoves
- Construct improved cook stoves for households
- Training sessions encouraging use of improved cook stoves and their proper use

Building a TOC – Step 3: Design Program

INPUT

Build improved cook stoves

GOAL

Health outcomes improve

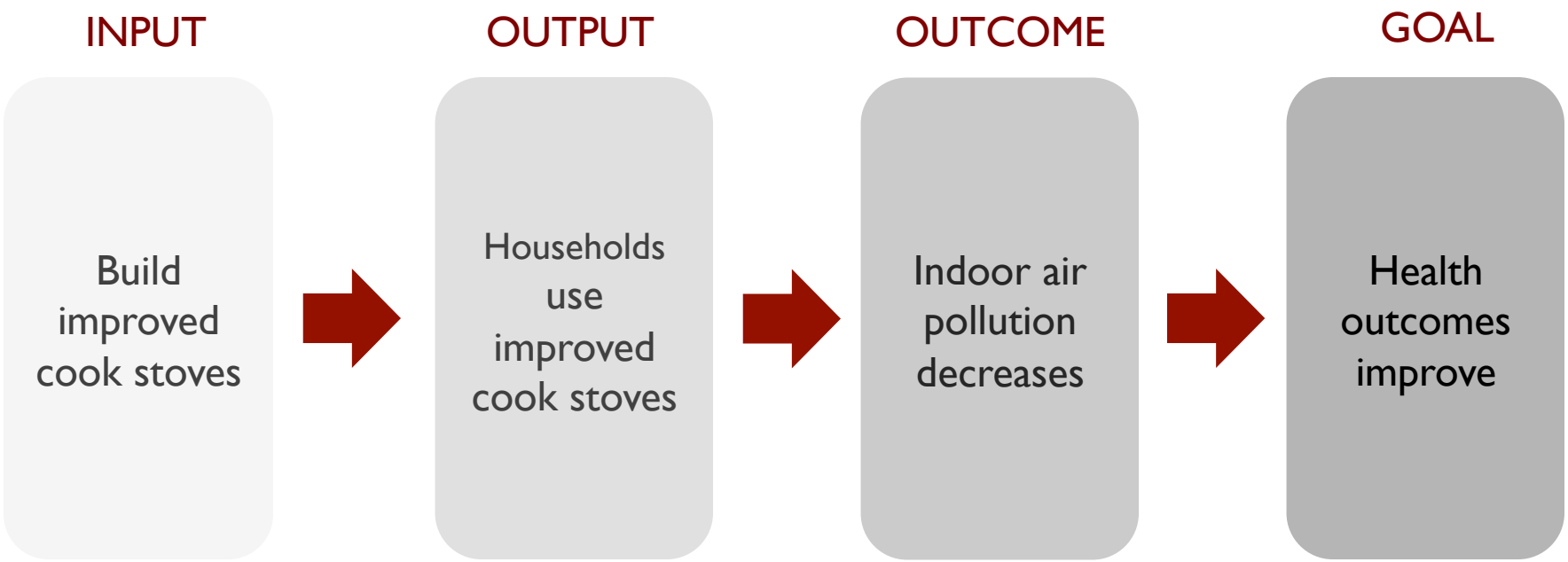
Situation/Context Analysis: Polluting stoves, smoke inhalation, poor health

Step 4: Mapping the causal pathway

- Step-by-step laying out the theory connecting your product/program to the goal

- Series of if…/then… statements forming results chain

Building a TOC – Step 4: Map Causal Pathway



Situation/Context Analysis: Polluting stoves, smoke inhalation, poor health

Step 5: Explicit assumptions

Assumptions are the key to unlocking the theory of change thinking

…and improve health outcomes

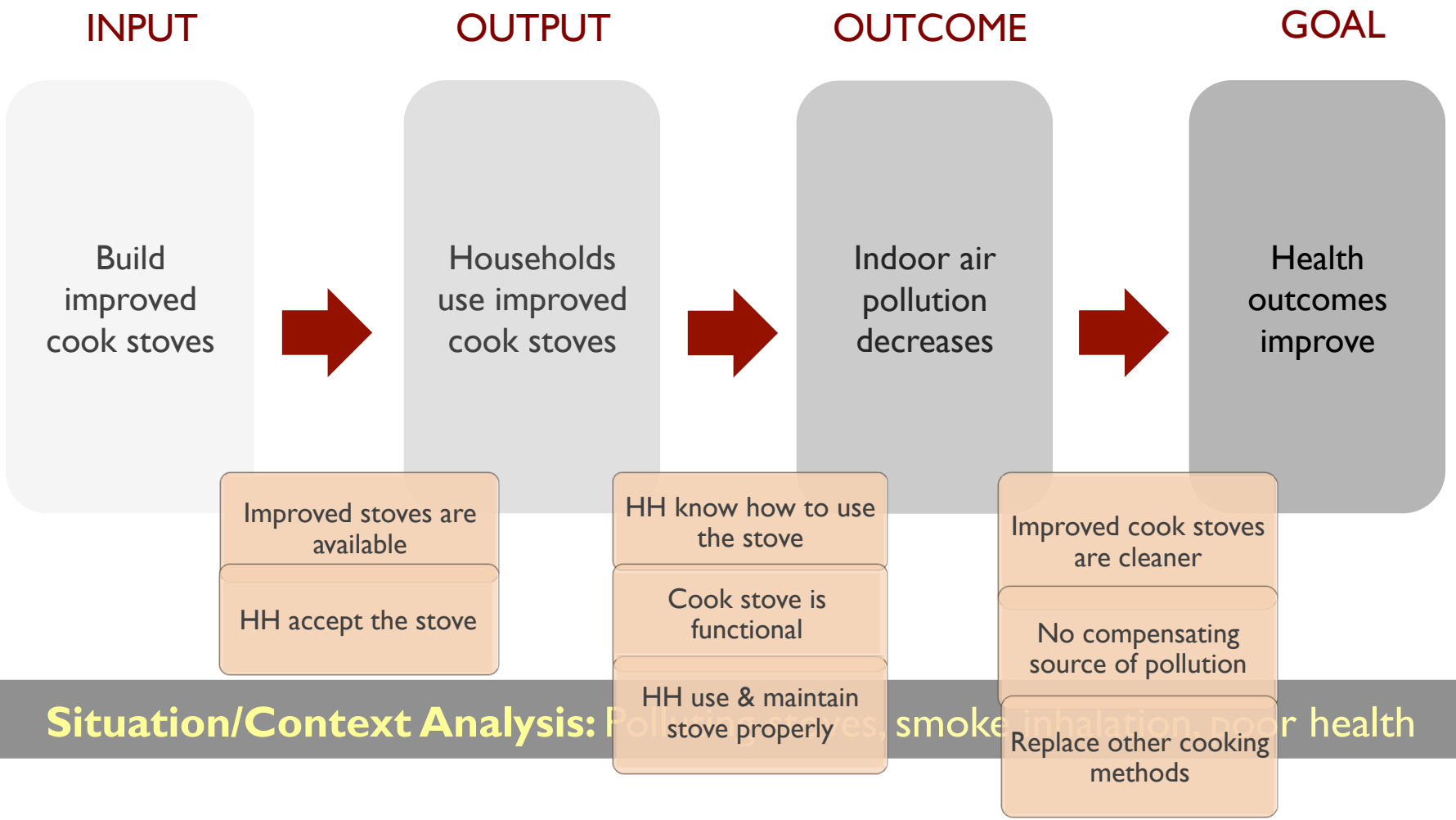
Households use clean cookstoves…

- Do current cooking methods pollute the household?
- Can providing them with new stoves increase use?
- What works?
- Where are the holes?

…and improve health outcomes

- Are household members ill because of pollution?
- What is necessary to protect their health?
- What is working?
- Where are the holes?

Building a TOC – Step 5: Explicit Assumptions



Step 6: Design indicators

- Indicators v. levels of results (goal, outcome, output, input)
- Indicators are signals of change, measures of progress

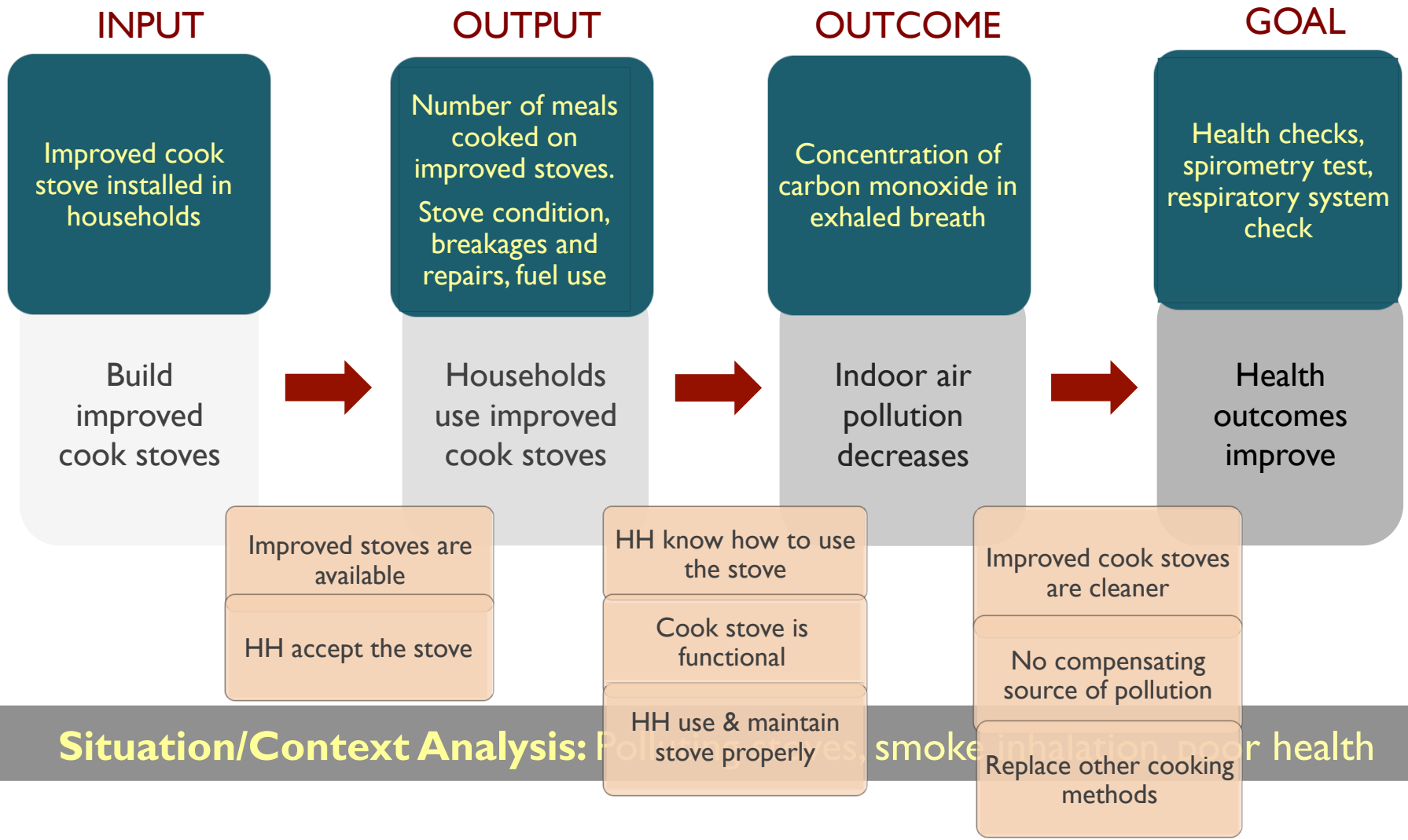
Good indicators

- Quantitative and qualitative
- Standard of comparison (i.e. baseline v. endline, defining “high-quality,” etc.)
- SMART
  - **S**pecific
  - **M**easurable
  - **A**chievable
  - **R**eliable
  - **T**ime-bound

Some ways to measure outcomes…

- Awareness
  - “Do you know that traditional cook stoves are bad for your health?”
- Availability
  - Market research
- Affordability
  - Price of improved cook stoves if available
- Impact
  - Test for levels of Carbon Monoxide (CO) in exhaled breath to measure for smoke inhalation
  - Other tests and self-reporting to measure health outcomes

Building a TOC – Step 6: Indicators



Step 7: Convert to Logical Framework

- Many of you will use “LogFrames” which are often enshrined in results – based contracts
- Going through the theory of change exercise helps us focus on causal mechanisms and building blocks of why programmes work even more explicitly
- And should lead to even better program design and outcomes

Building a TOC – Step 7: Convert to LogFrame

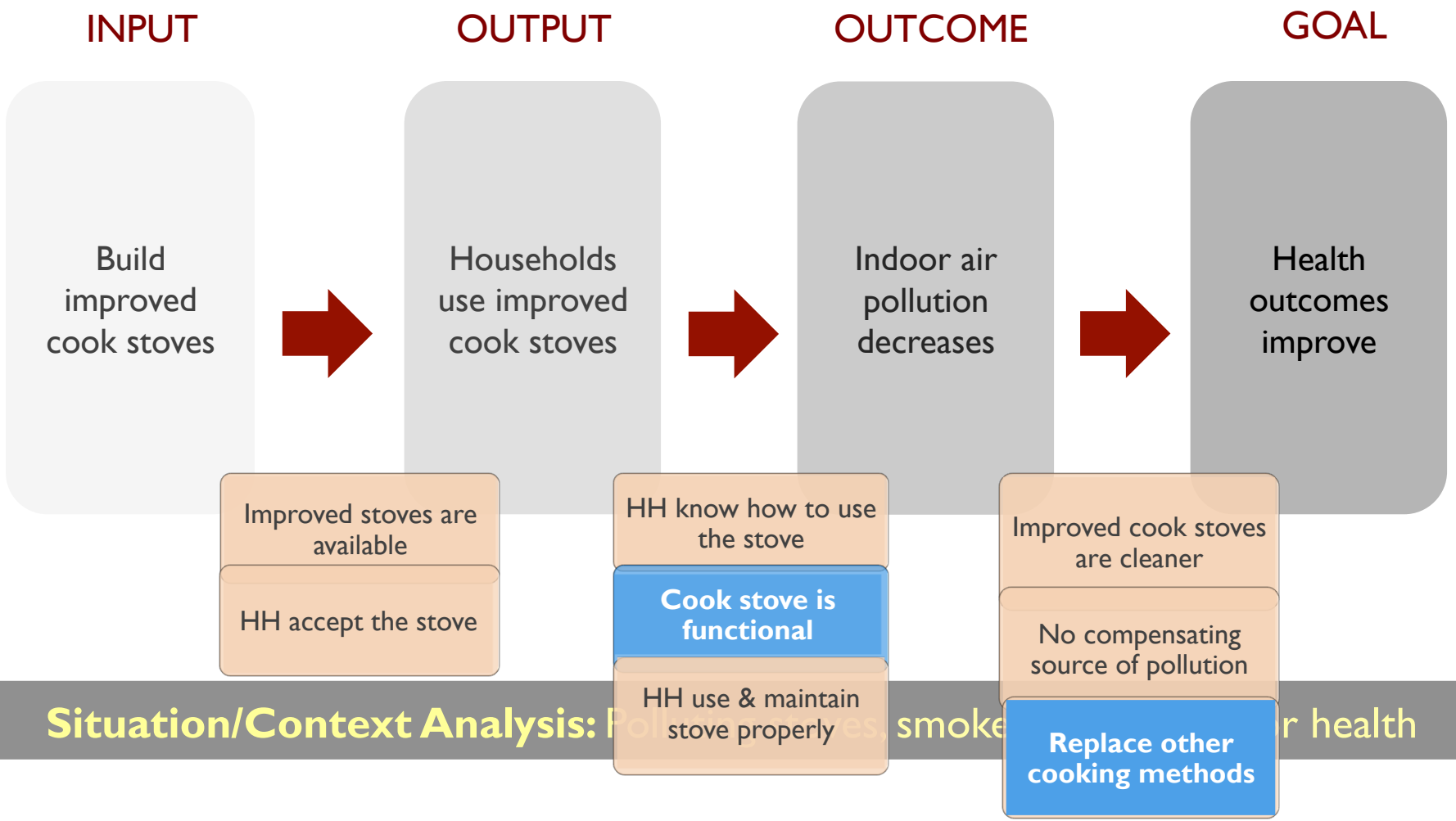
	Objectives	Indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions / Threats
GOAL (Impact)	Improved health outcomes	Well-functioning respiratory system	Health checks by trained professional	No other accompanying changes in behavior. Continued use of stoves over time
OUTCOME (Project Objectives)	Indoor air pollution decreases	Concentration of carbon monoxide in exhaled breath	Household survey, health checks	Stoves are cleaner, emit less CO2. No other compensating source of pollution. Replace other cooking methods
OUTPUTS	Households use improved cook stoves	Number meals cooked on stoves. Stove condition: breakages, repairs, fuel use	Household survey, observational visits	HH know how to use stove. Stove is properly maintained. Stove is of good quality
INPUTS (Activities)	Improved cook stoves are constructed	Installation of improved stoves in homes	Branch visits/ surveys	Improved stoves are accessible. Subsidized price is affordable.

Households use clean cookstoves…

…and improve health outcomes **??**

- “Respiratory tests of lung functioning, as well as a battery of health measures, both observed and self-reported… confirms that being offered a stove had no impact on health outcomes.”
- What went wrong?

Building a TOC – Step 5: Explicit Assumptions



What are the holes…

- A high share of cookstoves break

- Households continue to use other methods of cooking – thus, no reduction in CO2 emissions

How can we fill those holes?

- Ensure better quality
  - Better support for broken cookstoves

- Ensure clean stoves replace other cooking methods
  - Make clean cookstoves more convenient
  - Reduce need for extra burner
  - Train on use of new stoves in lieu of old methods

Lessons

- Conceptualizing, designing, and planning interventions
- Learning from other programs – successes and failures
- Course corrections and learning as you go
- Understanding why things work – or don’t

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