Embracing theory of change

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What is this talk about Theory of Change?

• Accountability and need to explain how our activities will lead to the impact we want
• We used to use **logical framework** (logframes)
  – Focus on activities and outputs with leaps of faith to objectives and goals
• **Theory of Change** framework adopted by CGIAR
  – More emphasis on how outputs will translate into impact
  – Understanding how change will happen and assumptions we are making
  – Being mainstreamed for M&E and learning

➢ Learn to talk the ToC !!

➢ Theory ?!??! Isn’t that what science is about: explaining cause & effect??
No agreed standard interpretation or presentation

- An art form – as many different interpretations as there are people working with ToC

- Focus on the general spirit, not on the details

- Needs to explain:
  1. Our cause-effect logic
  2. Our responsibility
  3. How change happens at all levels
At the Core: Our theory of why it will work (IBLI example)

A possible SOLUTION

Output: Index-based Insurance concept

Impact: Stronger resilience for poor cattle keepers

The GOAL
At the Core: Our theory of why it will work (IBLI example)

A possible SOLUTION

The GOAL

Economic principles + Remote sensing

Index-based Insurance concept

Impact: Stronger resilience for poor cattle keepers
At the Core: Our theory of why it will work (IBLI example)

- What evidence supports this theory?
- If evidence is weak, what assumptions are we making?
Setting it in an Impact Pathway: How? Who?

Sphere of Control
- Economic principles + Remote sensing
- Index-based Insurance concept
- Inclusive commercial insurance product
  - Pilot
  - At scale

Sphere of Influence
- Poor livestock keepers are clients
  - Pilot
  - At scale
- Higher and more stable income

Sphere
- Stronger resilience for poor cattle keepers

Research
Output
Research Outcome
Development Outcome
Impact

Inclusive commercial insurance product
Pilot
At scale
Higher and more stable income
Stronger resilience for poor cattle keepers
Highlighting how change will happen

Sphere of Interest

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Sphere of Influence

SDGs

MEL for Development Effectiveness

MEL for Research Use & Effectiveness

MEL for Research Relevance & Quality

Foresight & Initial stakeholder engagement

Research, innovation & services

Changes in policies and institutions

Direct/indirect benefits

Improved well-being & eco-system health

Changes in capacity (KAS) & aspirations

Changes in practice

Changes in policies and institutions

Rapid assessment and learning loops

Credit: Tonya Scheutz, Indicators Task Force
An initial ILRI theory of change

What we do...

- Develop, test, adapt and promote science-based practices; Provide compelling evidence in ways that persuade decision makers; increase capacity among ILRI key stakeholders and the institution itself

Outcomes

- SO1: Improved Practices
- SO2: Increased investment
- SO3: Increased capacities

IDOs

- Strong growth systems
- Fragile growth systems
- High growth with externalities

 Goals (Impacts)

- Increased productivity
- Increased resilience
- Increased income & employment
- Improved food safety

Assumptions (Critical success factors)

- Science is right
- ILRI is able to influence decision makers
- ILRI grows capacity
- ILRI is fit for purpose
- ILRI is able to secure sustainable funding

Sustainability

- Improved Food & Nutrition Security
- Reduced Poverty

Sphere of control

Sphere of influence

Sphere of interest
Livestock CRP Flagship ToC

Cluster 1: Assessing environmental sustainability and adaptability of production technologies

- Gender and age differentiated assessment of risks and opportunities arising from GEC
- Framework for assessing multiple environmental footprints for specific packages of technologies and interventions
- Quantification of environmental footprints of packages of technology interventions

Cluster 2: Optimize natural resource use and enhance the provision of ecosystem services

- Improved environmental management options identified and tested with environmental benefits quantified
- Tools and interventions to empower women and youth as agents of change for environmental management developed

Cluster 3: Develop and support improved institutions and other governance mechanisms for environmental solutions

- Improvements in land tenure to improve land use management for reducing land degradation
- Key enabling policies for three environmental issues developed
- Develop and support implementation of viable PES schemes
- Inform the global livestock and environment agenda

Figure 2.4a Livestock and the Environment Flagship theory of change

- Environmental concerns are considered in decision-making by national & international development partners, government agencies, and extension systems, including technology developers seeking to improve cattle, small ruminants, and pig production
- Targeted solutions are used by research and development partners to sustainably increase productivity of cattle, small ruminants, and pigs in the face of ongoing environmental changes

Research outputs (Sphere of control)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research &amp; (near) development outcomes (Sphere of influence)</th>
<th>Sub-IDOs (Sphere of influence → interest)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1 Novel approaches for ex-ante environmental assessment are widely adopted by extension systems, development partners, and government agencies to identify win-win options</td>
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<td>E1 Technology developers take environmental issues into account in their research priority setting</td>
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<td>A1 Quantiﬁcation of environmental impacts guides the development and selection of productivity-enhancing options by research and development partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>A1 Quantification of environmental beneﬁts leads to further development of management options by partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>E1,4 Government agencies and development partners at local and national levels are promoting environmental management options</td>
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<td>E4 Gender responsive environmental management options that are well adapted to Global Environmental Change (GEC) are adopted by households (women &amp; youth)</td>
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<td>A3,4,5 National government agencies make improvements in land tenure arrangements for reduced land degradation</td>
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<tr>
<td>A2 Role of women and young people in fostering environmental management promoted and strengthened across communities and with development partners</td>
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<td>E2 Communities pilot implementations for ecosystem services</td>
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<td>E3 Evidence generated by the Flagship influences key global livestock agencies (IPCC, Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock)</td>
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<td>A7 National government agencies design and implement key policies to improve the management of the environment and livestock systems</td>
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- Land, water and forest degradation (including deforestation) minimized and reversed
- Increased resilience of agro-ecosystems and communities, especially those including smallholders
- More productive and equitable management of natural resources
- Reduced net greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, forests, and other forms of land use
- Technologies that reduce women’s labour and energy expenditure developed and disseminated
- Improved capacity of women and youth to participate in decision-making
- Agricultural systems diversified and intensified in ways that protect soils and water
Why is it important for us to talk the ToC?

• Being applied to guide our planning at various levels: ILRI, programs, CRPs

• Makes us keep an eye on **impact** and how it will be achieved

• Plays to our training as **scientists**
  – Emphasizes the role of **evidence**
  – **Challenge our assumptions**

• Can make us more convinced ..... and more convincing!
Box 1. Definitions of key terms used in this document

Logic models (logical frameworks) – Link inputs and activities to outputs, outcomes and impacts in a visual presentation. Logic models do not provide insights into causality. The detail tends to be in the activity and output levels. Assumptions and risks that are part of a logical framework presentation tend to be outside the control of the program. Logic models follow an agreed presentational form.

Impact pathways – Build on logic models by giving more detail on the contribution of each activity on its path to impact. Impact pathways unpack the links between outcome and impact. Impact pathways are commonly presented graphically.

Theory of change (TOC) – Presents an explicit identification of the ways by which change is expected to occur from output to outcome and impact. The TOC questions the assumptions about causality underlying the relationships between outputs, outcomes and impact. In TOC the assumptions present the mechanisms of change. There is no single method or presentational form agreed for TOCs.
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