



First Ladies Initiative: Strategy Workshop

Developing an impact strategy

September 2017

Strategy Workshop Resource Materials – Introduction

- **The George W. Bush Institute developed the materials in this document in conjunction with Cicero Group to facilitate multi-day working sessions with First Ladies and their teams**

- **The Strategy Workshop has several goals:**
 - Introduce a few core principles that help organizations achieve greater impact (regardless of the issues they care about or the type or organization they are) related to strategy, planning and implementation, and measurement
 - Collaboratively develop a comprehensive Impact Strategy through which workshop participants decide (or refine) who they aim to serve; the positive changes they seek to induce in the long-, medium-, and near-terms; and what they will do to achieve those outcomes
 - Explore the unique position that First Ladies have in driving positive change in their country
 - Develop a preliminary theory of change for the First Lady's broad efforts and, where relevant, individual initiatives
 - Set the stage for additional work to determine implementation and measurement plans

- **While the subsequent slides do not represent the full set of content discussed in this workshop, they are intended to provide an overview of the primary principles and tools we use to achieve the goals described above**

- **Overview to Strategic Impact**
- **Developing a Theory of Change**
- **Planning and Implementing Strategically**
- **Strategic Measurement and Evaluation**

Do you assume and hope you'll make a difference because you're passionate and working hard? Or do you scientifically ensure you're always getting better at making a difference?

The 'Hope-for-It' Approach

An Exciting Idea...



Heartfelt Effort...



A Better World?



The Strategic Approach

An Exciting and Informed Idea...



An Always-Improving Theory...



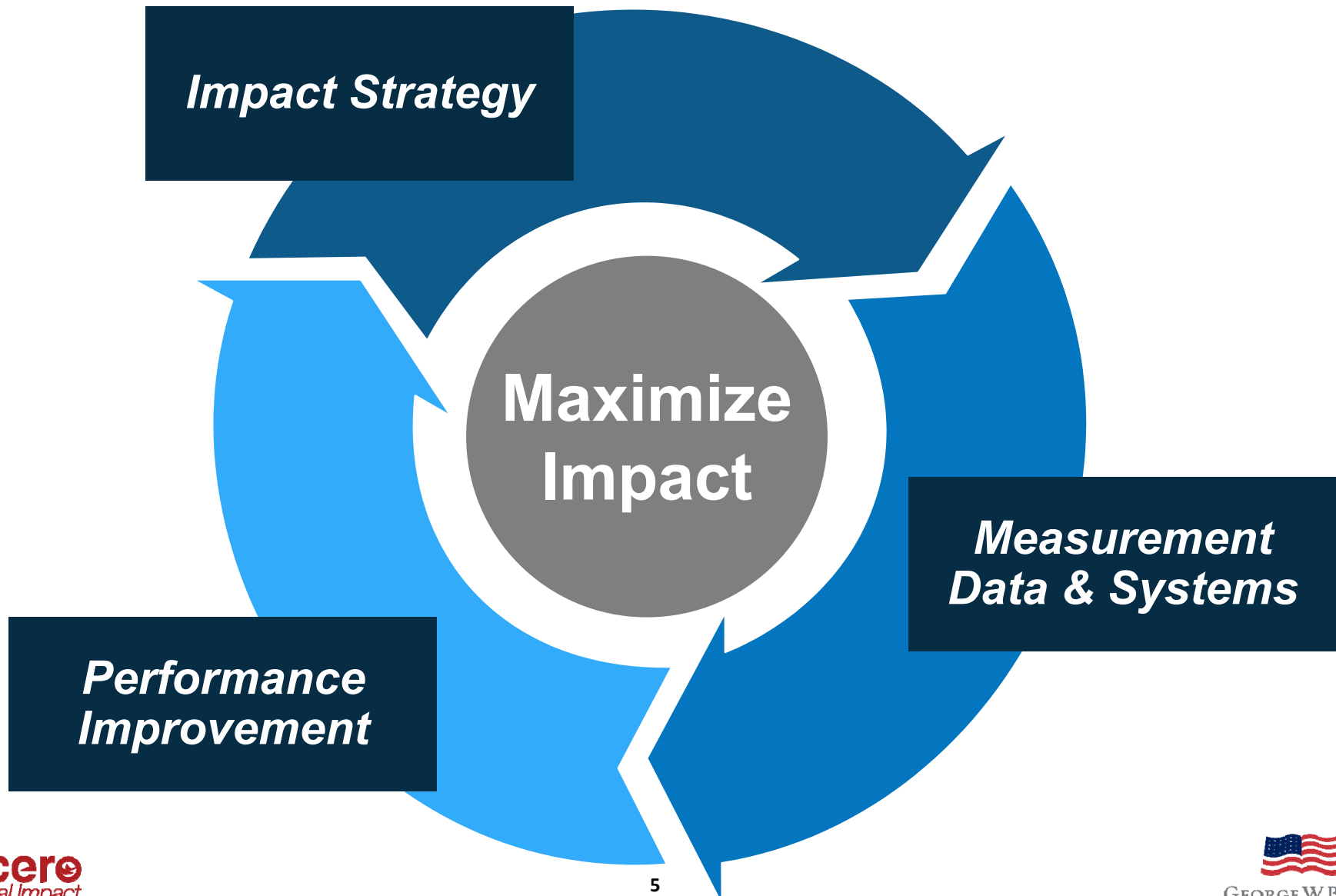
Data-driven Tests...



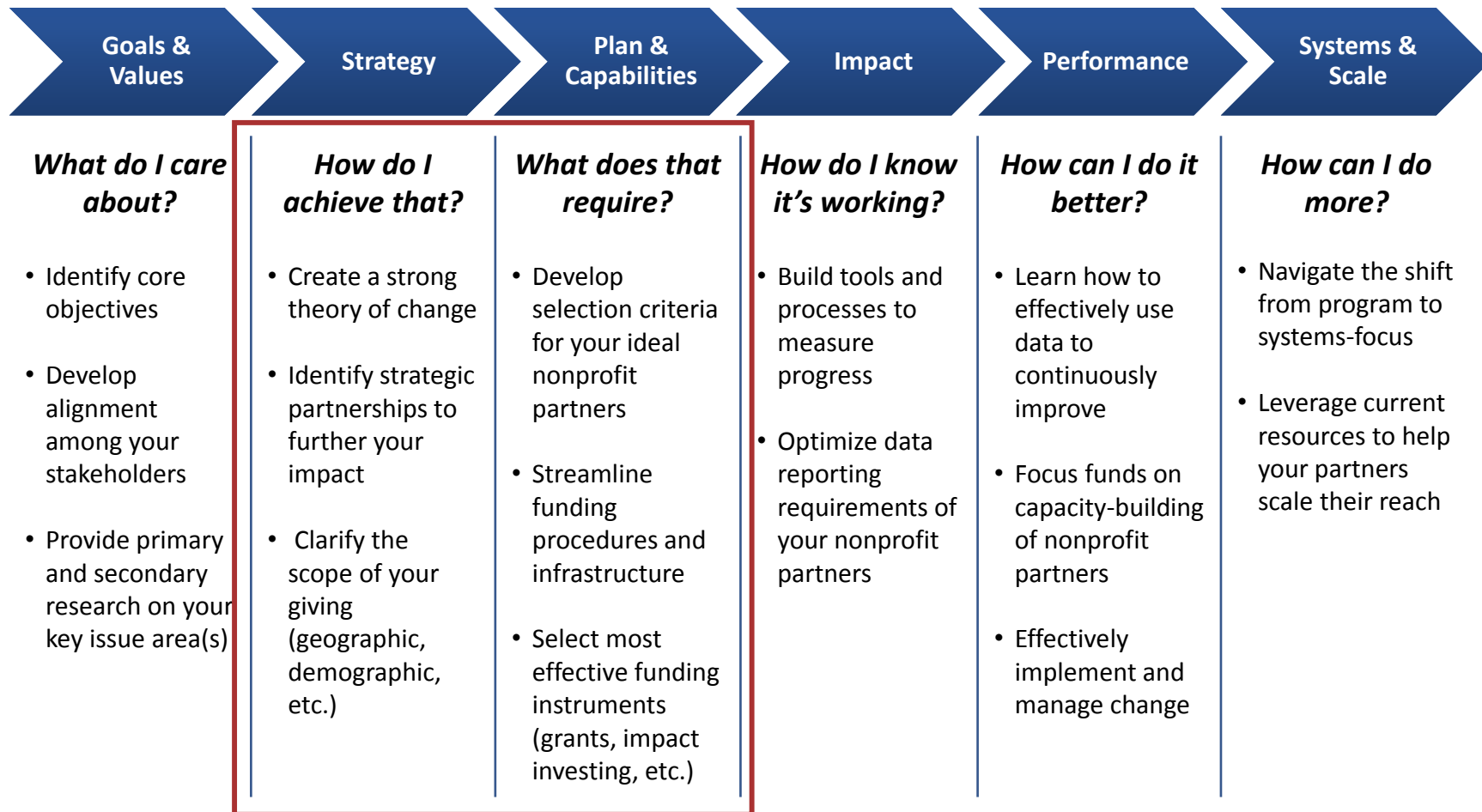
A Better World!



To truly maximize their impact, high performing organizations in the social sector need to consistently improve in and align across three key areas.



Having an impact as a funder requires continuously clarifying your goals and improving your approach.



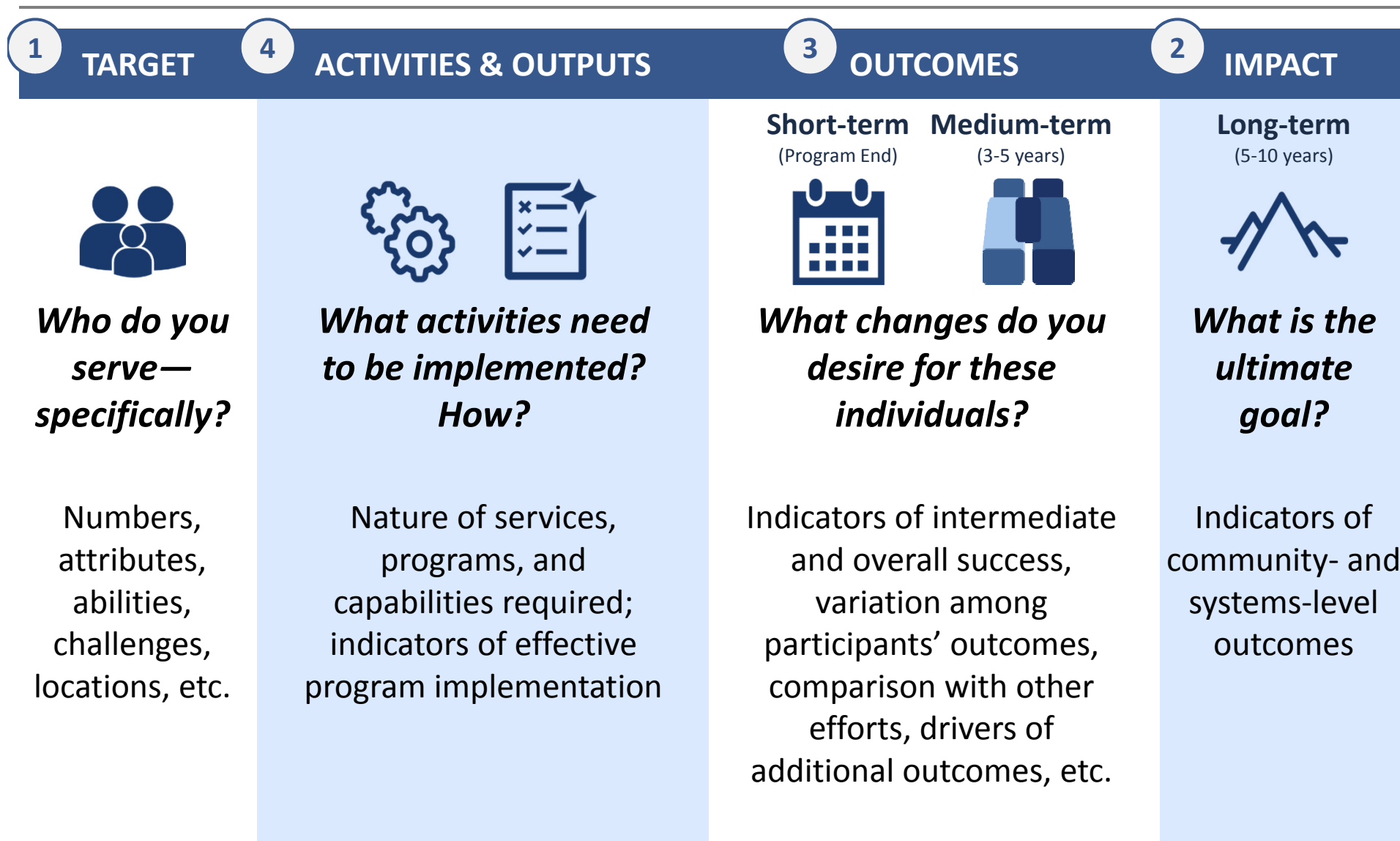
These two areas are the focus of this strategy workshop.

Discussing the following questions and materials as a team (including key external stakeholders) will be key to clarifying your impact strategy.

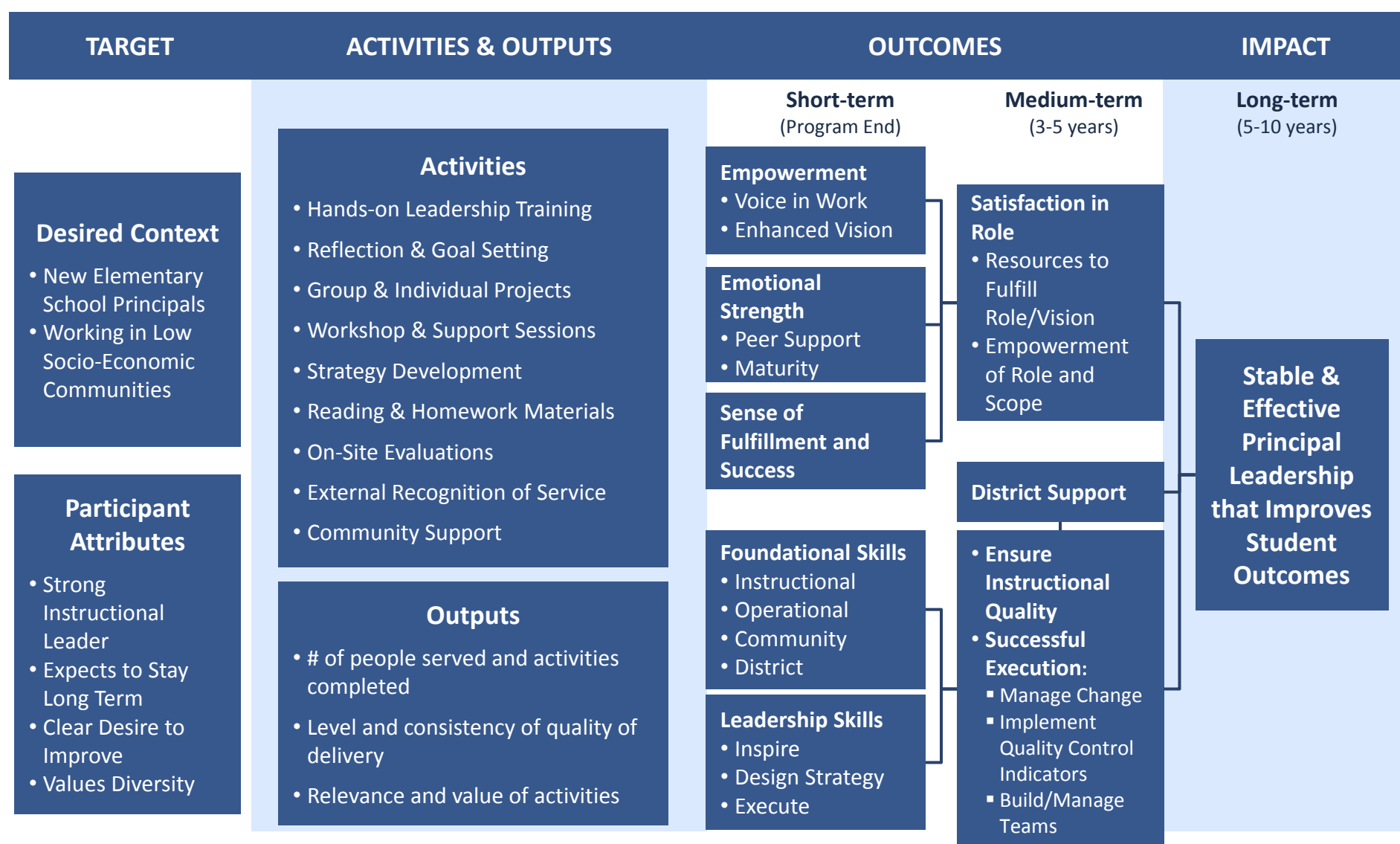
- What are the biggest needs your country faces today? About which of these are you most passionate and knowledgeable?
- Given your visibility, expertise, experience, and opportunities, what can you do to drive change that no one else can?
- When you combine needs, passion, knowledge, and opportunities, what two or three intended impacts will you focus on? In other words, what do you want to accomplish in the 5-10 years that would not be possible without your involvement?
- What are the handful of things you must do *exceptionally well* to achieve those results?
- Do you want to achieve transformative (or nationwide) scale? If so, what strategies or approaches best match your abilities and context?

- Overview to Strategic Impact
- Developing a Theory of Change
- Planning and Implementing Strategically
- Strategic Measurement and Evaluation

An effective Theory of Change begins with a clear target population, specific desired outcomes, and a robust 'bridge' of services that you expect will achieve those outcomes.



Here's a sample Theory of Change to improve principal leadership in disadvantaged schools; note everything is designed to achieve a clear, meaningful, and long-term change.



A Theory of Change is essential to ensuring an organization understands exactly what will help it successfully achieve its end goals.



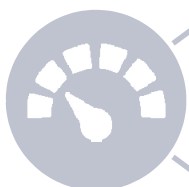
Focuses on *who* you are serving and *what* success will look like, versus simply scope and effort.



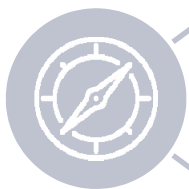
Clarifies the essential elements for success so you can prioritize effectively and avoid mission drift.



Creates the basis for a logical, compelling story around which people can align.



Specifies what you need to measure to both *prove* and *improve* your impact.



Articulates what you *aren't* doing and what you assume *must* happen.

How you develop the Theory of Change matters at least as much as what you develop; engage both hearts and minds to improve the value and the use of the theory.

- **Iterate** – You won't get it 'right' all at once. Improve, refine, prioritize, and question as you learn more.
- **Use Data** – Let research and data be your friend. Learn from others; learn from experience. Do it intentionally, iteratively, and consistently.
- **Engage Others** – Bring increasingly large groups of stakeholders into the process. Start small, but in the end everyone should have a chance to give feedback.
- **Acknowledge Your Assumptions** – Ask: “Am I sure X will lead to Y?”, “What if this piece of the puzzle isn't right?”, and “What else might be necessary to succeed?”
- **Set Priorities** – Don't assume you can do it all; pick and choose what you will (and will not) do. Values matter, especially here.
- **Be Social** – Don't assume you should go it alone. Plan to collaborate, coordinate, and/or just communicate.

There are four essential questions that help foundations, nonprofits, and social enterprises decide how they will achieve their vision.

**New vs. Proven
Intervention**

Can we replicate something that works or do we need to innovate?

- Are the beneficiaries and their needs unique relative to previous approaches?
 - Do we have distinct capabilities or technologies to drive innovation?
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**Broad vs. Narrow
Range of Outcomes**

What are we willing to hold ourselves accountable for?

- A narrower focus is easier to achieve, but may not drive full-scale or long-term change.
 - Consider the complexity of the issue and the capacity, resources, and ambition of the organization.
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**Programs vs. Systems
Level of Engagement**

What role will we play—serving individuals directly or building an ecosystem?

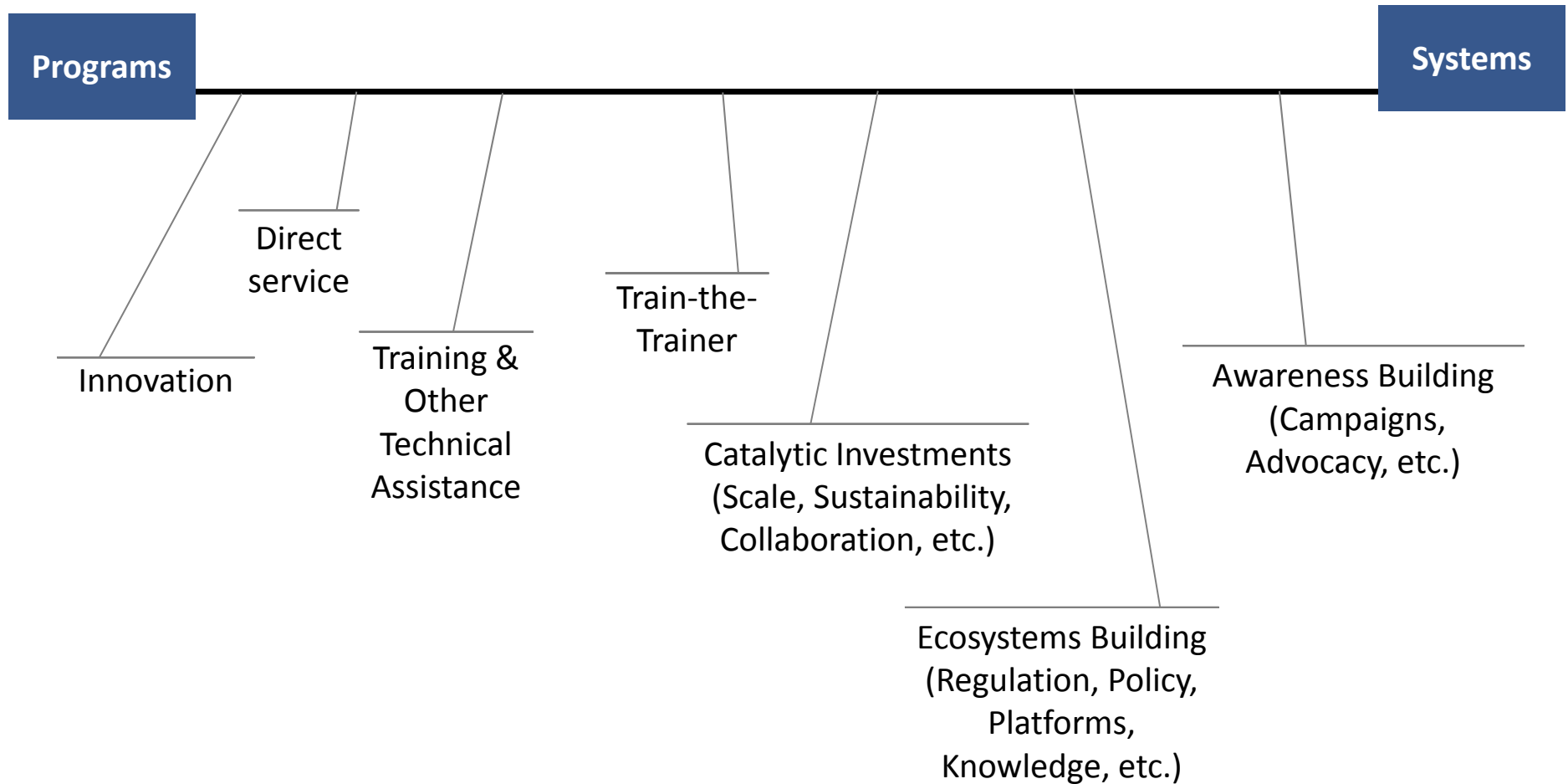
- How can we make the biggest impact over time given the needs that exist and our unique capabilities and resources?
 - The activities and capabilities are very different at each end of the spectrum.
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**Independent vs.
Collective Action**

To what degree will we need to work with others to succeed?

- When working with others, how formal and structured is the relationship?
- How much alignment and overlap is there among those involved?

When aiming for population-level change, a crucial factor funders must consider is where to engage on the spectrum between delivering programs and fostering systems improvement.



Combining options is often appropriate. The key is to be very intentional about which you will pursue and how multiple approaches will be integrated over time.

The “Transformative Scale” article highlights two paths to scaling impact; we add a third that creates the foundational infrastructure entire systems need to change.

Organizational Pathways	Infrastructure Pathways	Field-building Pathways
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Distribute through existing platforms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use an existing network to distribute your solution ■ Recruit & train other organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Scale what works by sharing it with others (via technical assistance, consulting, etc.) ■ Unbundle & scale for impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Disaggregate high-impact, scalable, and cost-effective elements of the model and scale these ■ Leverage technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use technology to help you distribute/spread your model to more people at lower cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase knowledge and urgency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Build the case for and show the way toward the desired results ■ Develop common, rigorous data and accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cover participating populations, performance, outcomes, and efficiency – Facilitate data-driven conversations that prove and improve results ■ Build capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Priorities include leadership, impact orientation, continuous improvement, etc. – Include all stakeholders: funders, service providers, advocates, etc. ■ Facilitate financing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure adequate funding that incentivizes the right outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strengthen a field <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase and strengthen a constellation of organizations to deliver greater impact ■ Change public systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Alter a key component of the system, inspire change by showing a better way, or gradually inject new leadership ■ Influence policy change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Obtain public funding and/or change regulations to promote scaling of impact ■ Consider for-profit models <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Act as a proof-point for a new market or adopt a for-profit model ■ Alter attitudes, behaviors, and norms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Convince many individuals to change something within their individual control

Some funders strategically build a ‘balanced portfolio’ across this spectrum, where each investment has distinct objectives but all are connected to a broader, systemic strategy.

Pilot	Transition	Signature
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objective: Develop proof of concept for and/or bring attention to a pressing issue• Timeline: 2-3 years• Scale: Relatively small• Funder’s role: Close involvement in design and delivery• Investments Required: Feasibility & design studies, program and systems design, dedicated program teams, etc.• Measurement Approach: Preliminary, near-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objectives: Either exit/handoff OR shift from proof of concept to signature program• Timeline: 1-2 years• Scale: Rapid expansion• Funder’s role: Develop infrastructure and partnerships for scale; solidify and lead coalition; determine management structure & roles• Measurement Approach: Focused on performance measurement to refine & scale; establish systems & processes for long-term evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objective: Leverage the foundation’s most valuable assets—ability to convene, highlight, and advance—to yield transformational impact and influence, especially for the community’s top priorities• Timeline: 5+ years• Scale: Very expansive and/or highly visible• Funder’s role: Take lead coordination, thought leadership, and funding roles• Measurement Approach: More rigorous, focused on long-term outcomes

Within this example, program areas might include a range of program types, with each program assessed according to its current purpose and stage.

Why Pilot?

- No effective alternative
- Funder has ability to design and implement
- Recognition of and willingness to accept risk/reward tradeoffs
- Clear “exit” strategy (via partnerships, hand-off, policy, etc.)

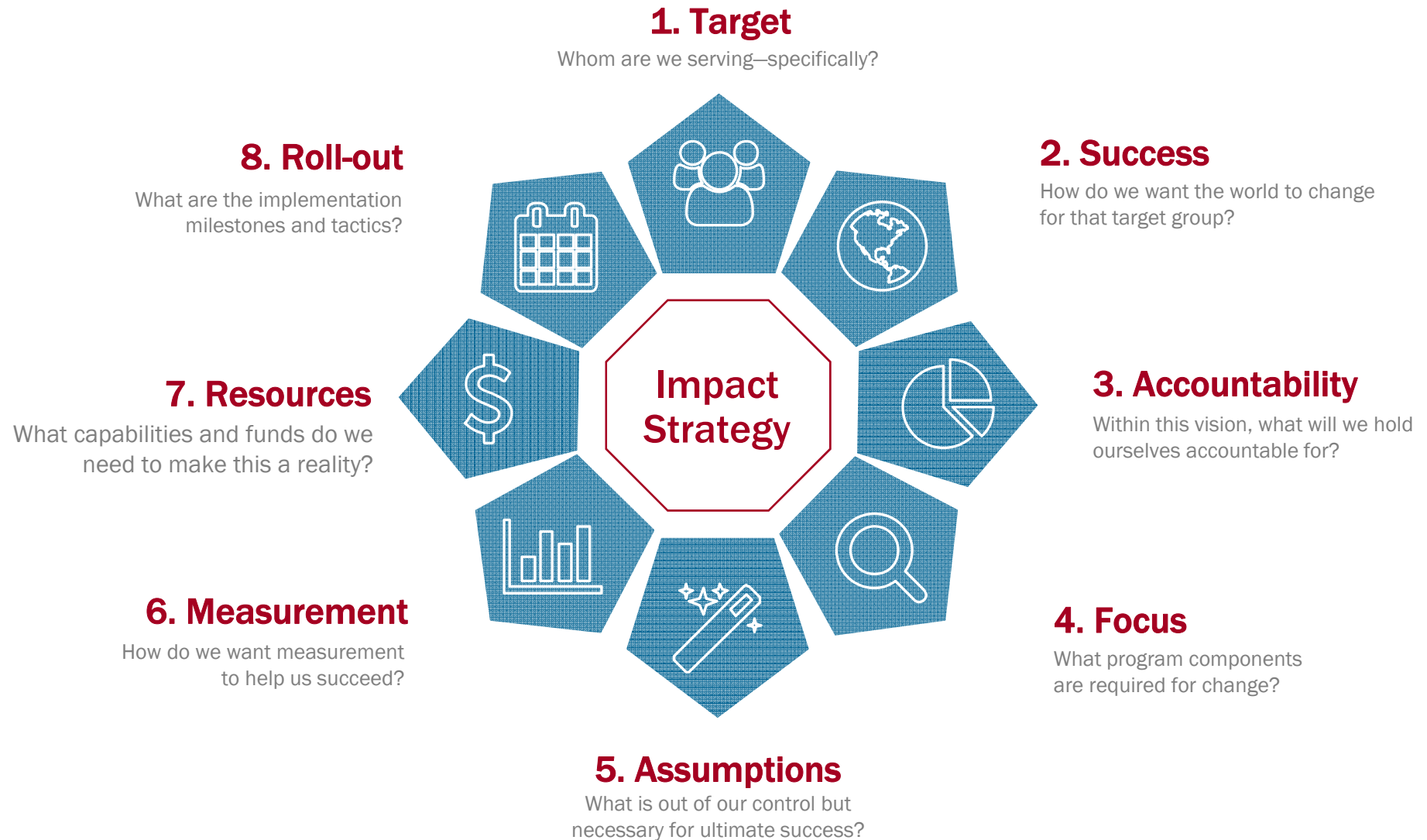
Why Transition?

- Pilot is successful—has demonstrated impact, issue remains a priority, program can be cost-effective
- Opportunity for scaled impact is clear
- Strategy to achieve scale is clear and feasible

Why Own & Scale?

- Addresses principals’ top priorities
- Appropriate in scale, visibility, and impact
- Worth funder’s ongoing leadership and investment
- Facilitates partnerships and sustainability

The ultimate goal of strategic planning is to develop a robust impact strategy that articulates a compelling vision, focus, and approach for how you will make a difference.



- Overview to Strategic Impact
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The key to effective implementation and work planning is beginning with the end in mind. What are you trying to accomplish, by when, and what are the key steps to achieve that?

Illustrative Strategic Planning Template

Due Date	Work Stream	Objective	Tasks / Steps	Review
End of the Year	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health, Education, and Gender ministries; private sector; development agencies; and parliament understand ECD report findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active participation in National IECD steering committee Launch global ECD campaign (Oct-Nov) Thought leadership (ongoing messaging, publications, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly report to the Executive Committee
October 31	Health	Describe the outcome—what will have happened or changed when you're successful.		If desired, identify who will need to review or approve the work and how often that occurs.
Q1 2018	Gender Based Violence		Break each work stream into the key activities or tasks that need attention. Each of these will have its own subtasks (see next page).	
By 2020	Entrepreneurship			
Choose whatever due dates are appropriate. They can be different across work streams.				

Note: This template can be used at multiple levels. Just be sure to choose streams that are similar in size or priority and list all streams required for ultimate success.

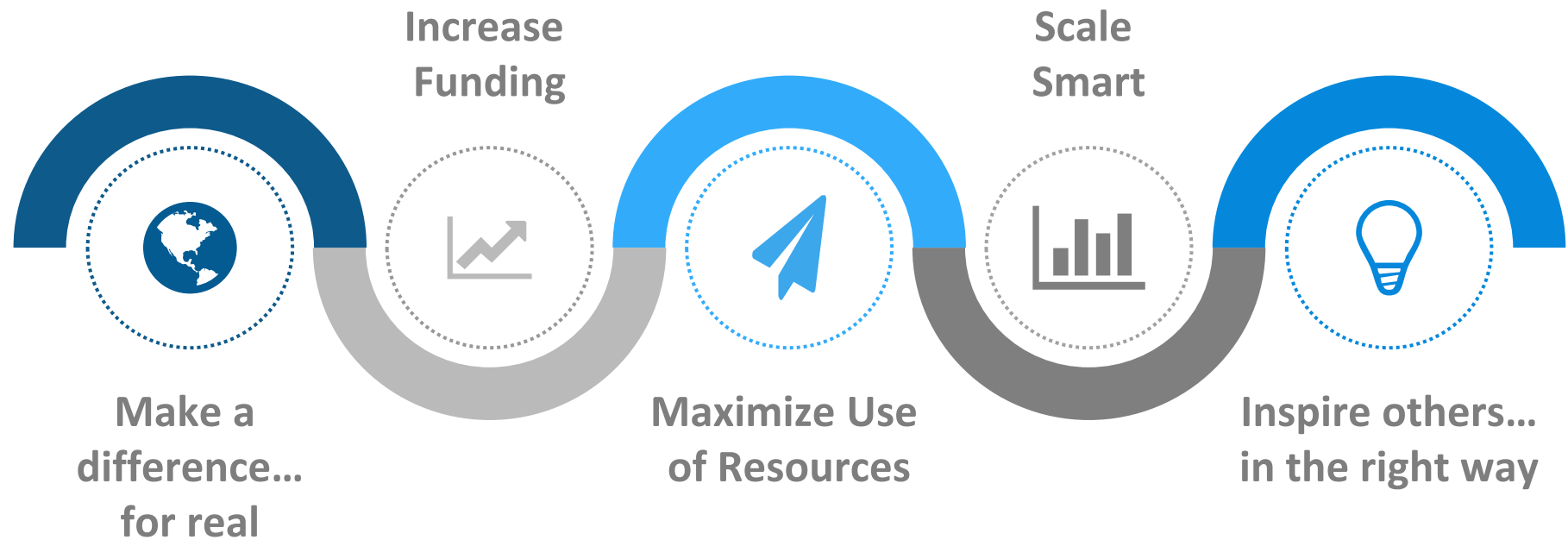
Building on the overall plan you can then set a goal that corresponds to each major work stream and plan the subtasks and timing required to achieve the corresponding steps.

Sample Objective: Health, Education, and Gender ministries; private sector; development agencies; and parliament understand ECD report findings

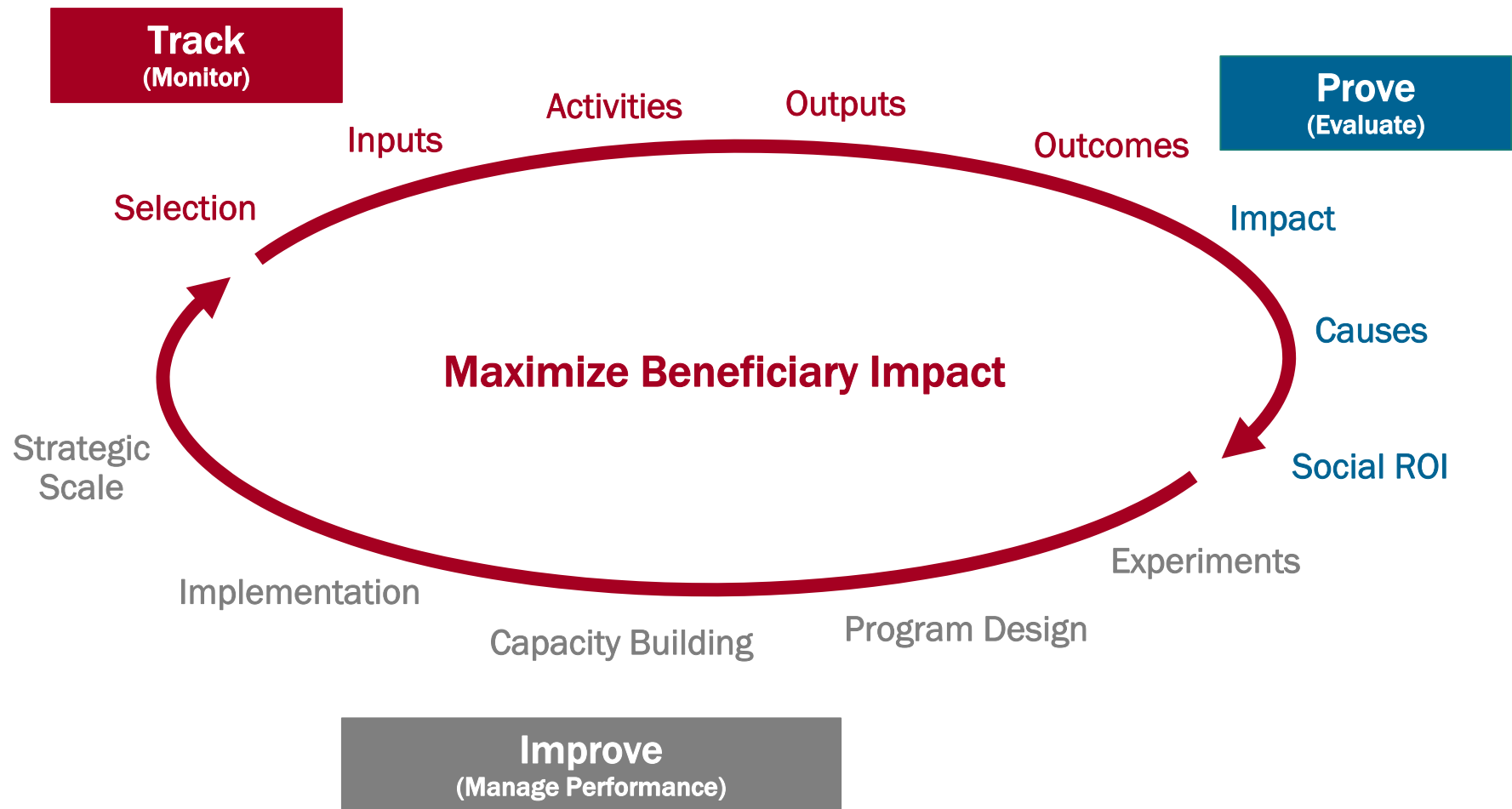
	August	September	October	November
Activity participation in National IECD steering committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send the report to all members of the committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up call / meeting to discuss report with each member Agenda includes discussion of ECD report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IECD Meeting (??/10) 	
Launch global ECD campaign (Oct-Nov)	<p>Choose whatever periods are helpful—days, weeks, fortnights, quarters, even years.</p>			
Thought leadership (ongoing messaging publications, etc.)				
Stakeholder calls, meetings				
Team meeting agenda	<p>For each period, identify the specific activities that need work.</p>			
Key Dates	<p>These rows can be used to anticipate and plan for major events and supporting activities.</p>			

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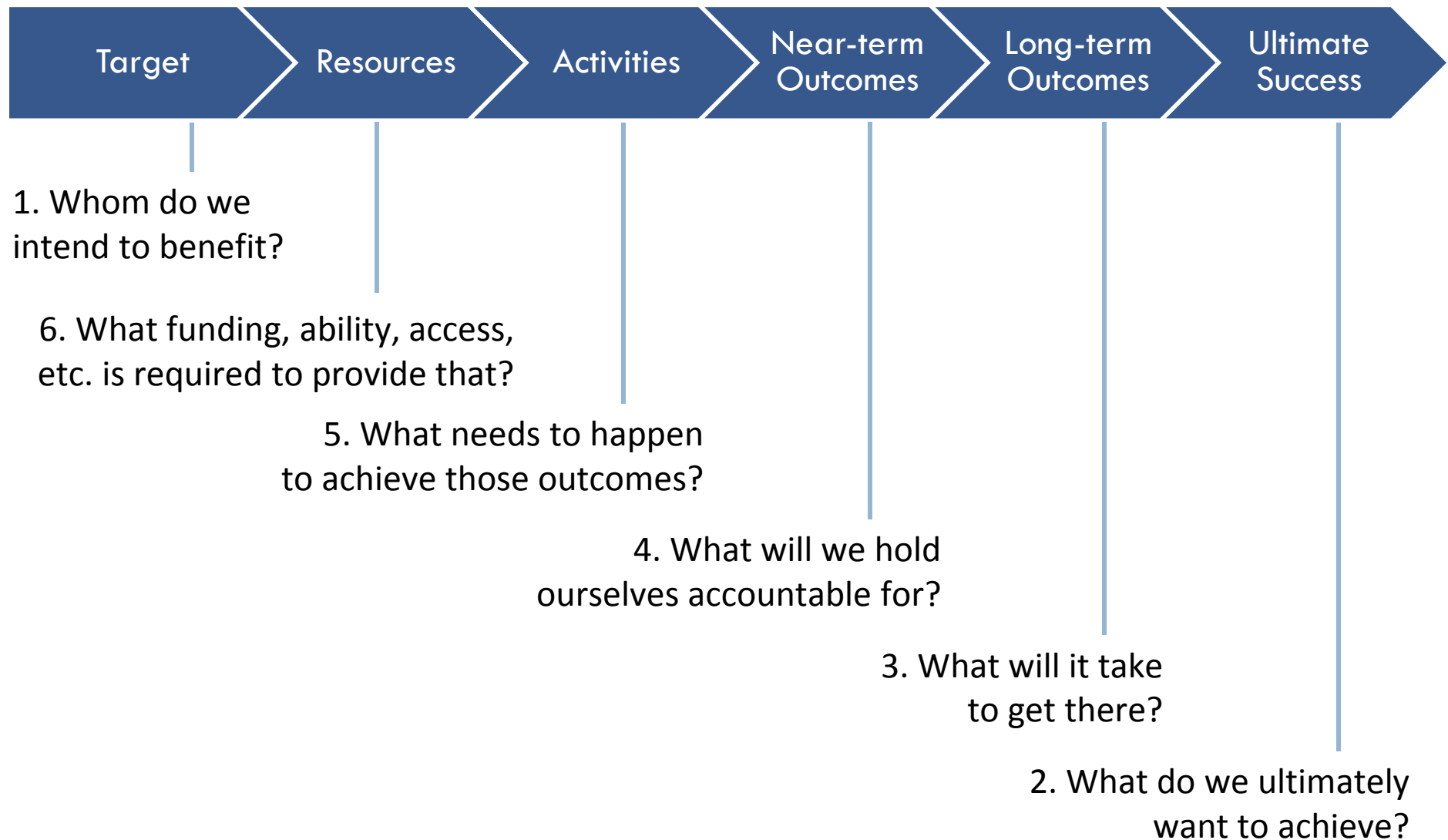
There are a number of compelling reasons that both foundations and charitable organizations (e.g. NGOs, civil service organizations, etc.) should invest in measurement.



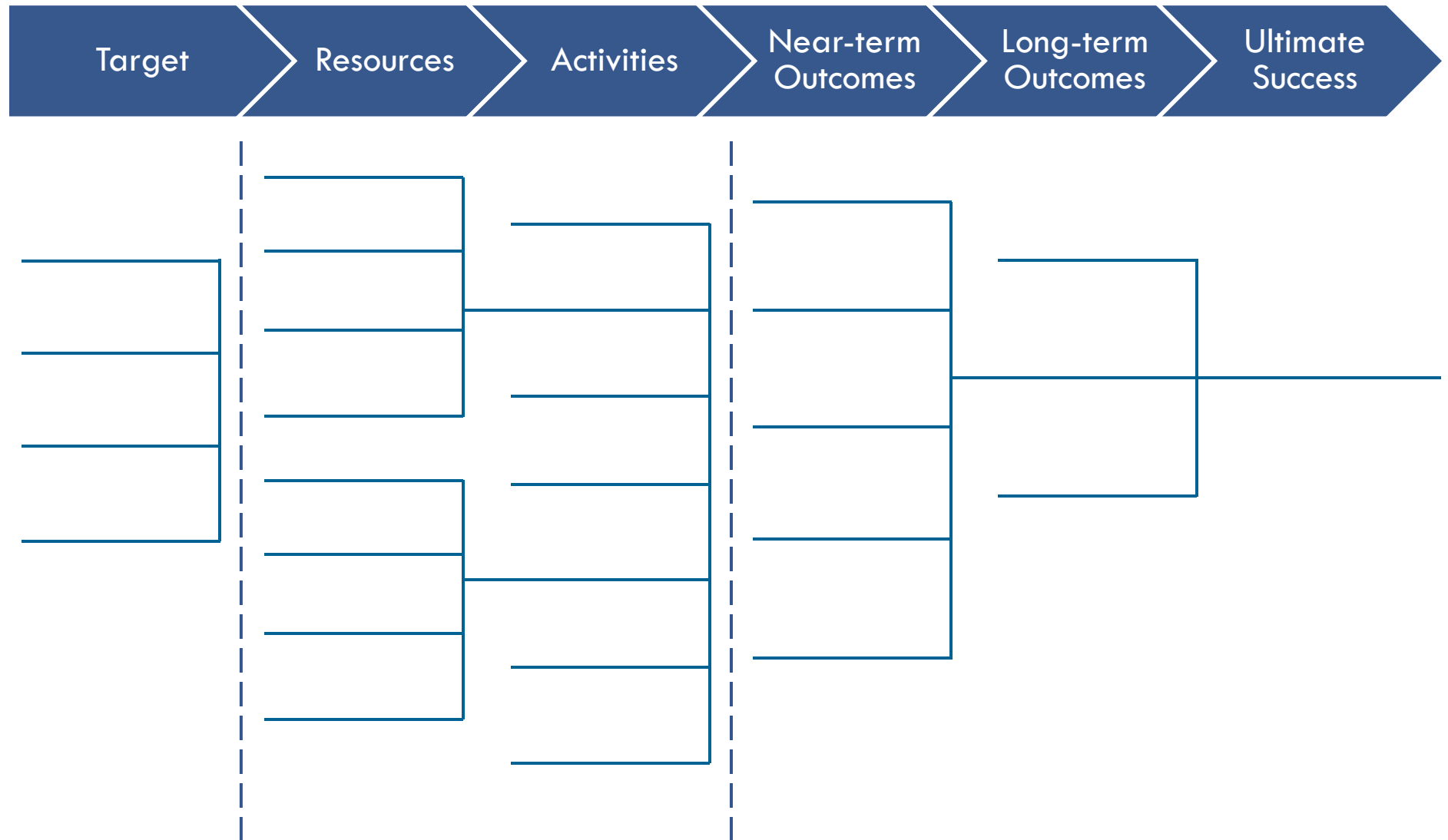
High-performing organizations invest in Monitoring and Evaluation not only to prove but also to improve impact.



To strategically identify what you should measure, just follow your theory of change.



Use your theory of change to develop an “outcomes tree”—start with ultimate success and work backwards from there by articulating what must be true for that to occur.



As the example below shows, you can ask both ‘prove’ and ‘improve’ questions for each step in your theory of change.

- 1) Ask the right *prove* and *improve* questions
- 2) Prioritize which questions are most important

	Target Population	Desired Outcomes	Program Delivery
Goal (Example)*	Engage principals in high-need K-12 public schools	Create stable and effective principal leadership that improves student outcomes	Deliver consistent, high-quality training, coaching, and support
Prove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we enrolling the ‘right’ people in our programs? • Are we working in the ‘right’ communities and/or systems? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What percent of participating principals are achieving each and all of the desired outcomes? • How frequently do near-term outcomes lead to long-term success? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do our programs and services consistently drive the success we seek?
Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we marketing to and reaching the ‘right’ principals with the right messages? • Do we have a better understanding of the needs of the target population? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does success vary among participants (based on program affiliate, participant profile, external factors, etc.)? • What drives participant satisfaction with the program and its outcomes? • How do our costs/outcomes compare with other options? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which program elements drive the greatest impact? Why, how, and for whom? • How consistent is our program quality across all affiliate locations?

Determining what to measure is straightforward (but not necessarily easy) once you have a strong Theory of Change and have prioritized your ‘Prove’ and ‘Improve’ objectives.

TARGET (Who We Serve)	ACTIVITIES (What We Provide)	OUTCOMES (Changes We Seek)
Strong Instructional Leader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past performance reviews • Observation of instructional leadership • Historical school improvement 	Hands-on Leadership Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and content of training delivery • Participant engagement and satisfaction 	Empowerment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reflection survey results (satisfaction, expected time in job, etc.) • Observation of proactive leadership
Clear Desire to Improve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of soliciting feedback • Self-reflection survey results 	Community Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents belonging to school leadership councils • Parent and stakeholder satisfaction • Monthly volunteer hours logged at schools 	Stable & Effective Principal Leadership that Improves Student Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student assessment data (formative and summative) • Teacher perceptions of principal leadership

Don't reinvent the wheel. Do your homework on what metrics others use and what has been validated elsewhere.

Answering the following questions will help you develop a comprehensive strategic measurement plan.

Identify Metrics

Outcomes → Indicators → Metrics → Sources → Timing

Clarify End Users

1. Who will be the primary “end users” of the data?
 2. For each end user, what decisions or actions do you want data to inform?
 3. For each objective, what is the “minimum threshold” for data and rigor?
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Plan Collection

1. Determine the minimum set of collection activities and tools to collect these metrics
 2. Identify the appropriate sample for each activity & tool
 3. Develop and test the collection tools (e.g. surveys, tests, interview or focus group guides, etc.)
 4. Develop analysis and reporting tools/templates
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Determine Timeline

1. What phases do you need?
2. When do you need to complete each phase?
3. What resources and steps are required for each phase

Activity: How would you use this process to accomplish each of the following monitoring and evaluation objectives?

- Identify the focus of a formal impact evaluation
- Determine what data to collect for each program participant
- Identify the program elements that drive the greatest impact
- Determine the top two areas for improvement in the next year
- Increase standardization in delivery and outcomes across a network
- Identify what programs to cut when facing a budget crisis
- Calculate your social return on impact (SROI) in financial terms
- Compare your approach and impact with that of others
- Convince upper management that you need more resources for M&E
- Determine how well program organizers understand the needs of participants / corps members

Finally, a key measurement challenge is knowing how much and how rigorously to measure. The following table outlines some of the key options and their pros and cons.

High Breadth of Data Needed Low	<p><u>Measure A Lot Simply</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Benefits</u>: Rapid, directional results; enables learning throughout the organization • <u>Costs</u>: Robust data system (and data entry); full leadership commitment and staff buy-in 	<p><u>Measure Everything Rigorously</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Benefits</u>: Conclusive proof of impact and its drivers; full range of data to drive ongoing performance • <u>Costs</u>: Leadership commitment & staff buy-in; robust data system; significant expertise & resources for evaluation (often external)
	<p><u>Measure Very Little</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Benefits</u>: Limited—stories and anecdotes (though these may be misleading on their own) • <u>Costs</u>: Minimal (e.g. simple satisfaction surveys and/or success stories) 	<p><u>Measure A Few Things Very Well</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Benefits</u>: Highly targeted data collection of “most important issues” streamlines burden & focuses evaluation • <u>Costs</u>: Significant expertise & resources for evaluation

Low Rigor Required High