

THEORY OF CHANGE

A Tool for Designing Programs



WHAT IS A “THEORY OF CHANGE”?

Many approaches; *process* and a *product*

- A theory of change describes a *process* of desired change
 - makes explicit the way we think about a current situation or problem, its underlying causes, the long-term change we seek, and what needs to happen in order for that change to come about.
- A *product*
 - that contains a set of hypotheses and critical assumptions that make up causal pathways of change needed to bring about a long-term goal.



WHY DO WE NEED A THEORY OF CHANGE?

- Builds a common understanding around the process needed to achieve a desired change.
- Helps identify critical junctures in the change process
- Uses evidence to support the underlying assumptions and the links between actions and outcomes.
- Identifies critical areas addressed by external actors and how the program will link to them.
- Provides a detailed map showing pathways of change.
 - how multiple activities will lead to achievement of goals.
 - Identifies who will do what



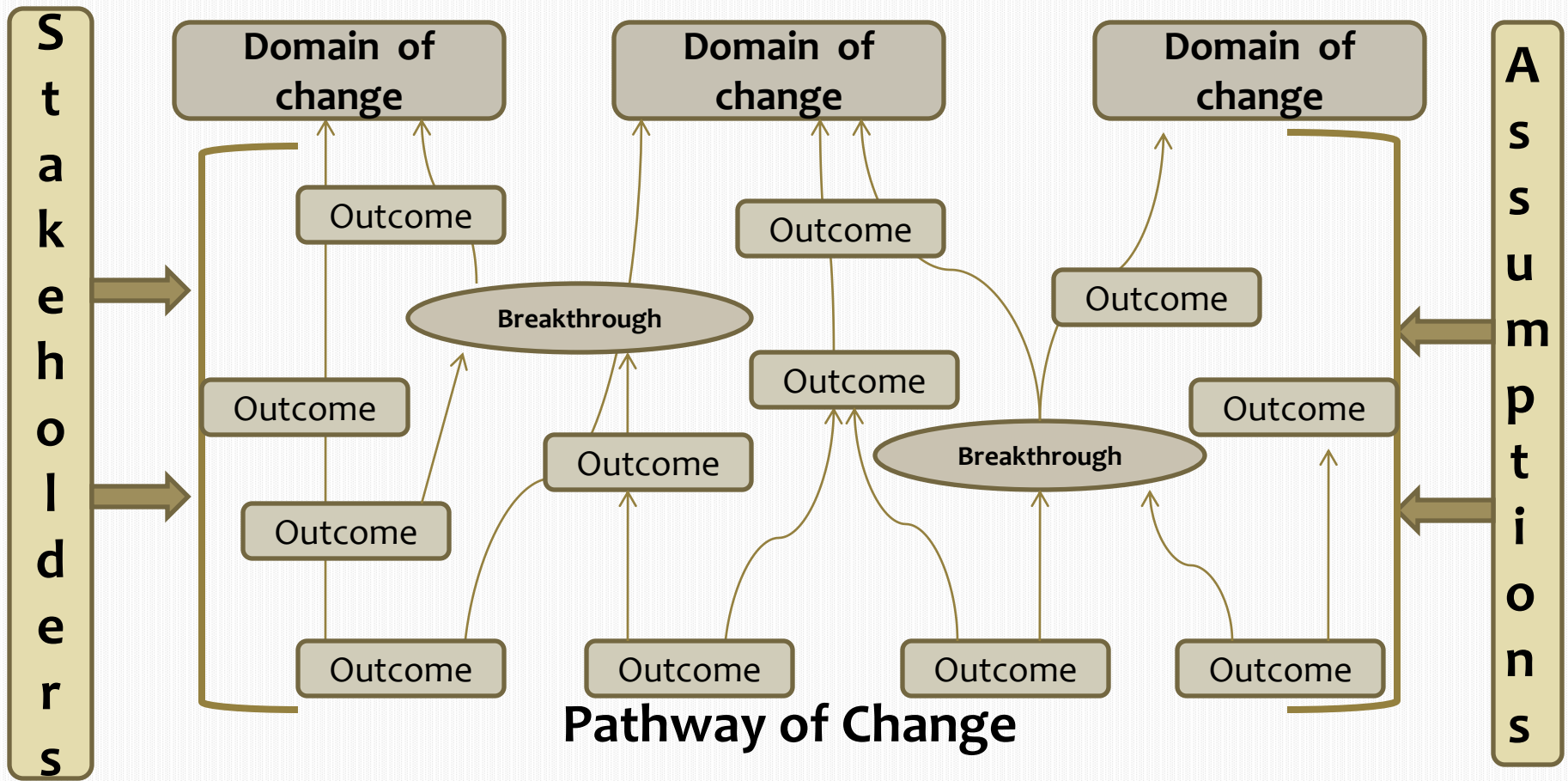
COMMON ELEMENTS OF A THEORY OF CHANGE

- A problem statement
- A desired long-term goal
- Domains of change
- Pathways of change, which include breakthroughs and incremental outcomes
- Assumptions and Risks
- Stakeholders
- Diagram and narrative summary



Theory of Change Conceptual Model

Desired Long-Term Goal



Problem statement

CONSTRUCTING A TOC

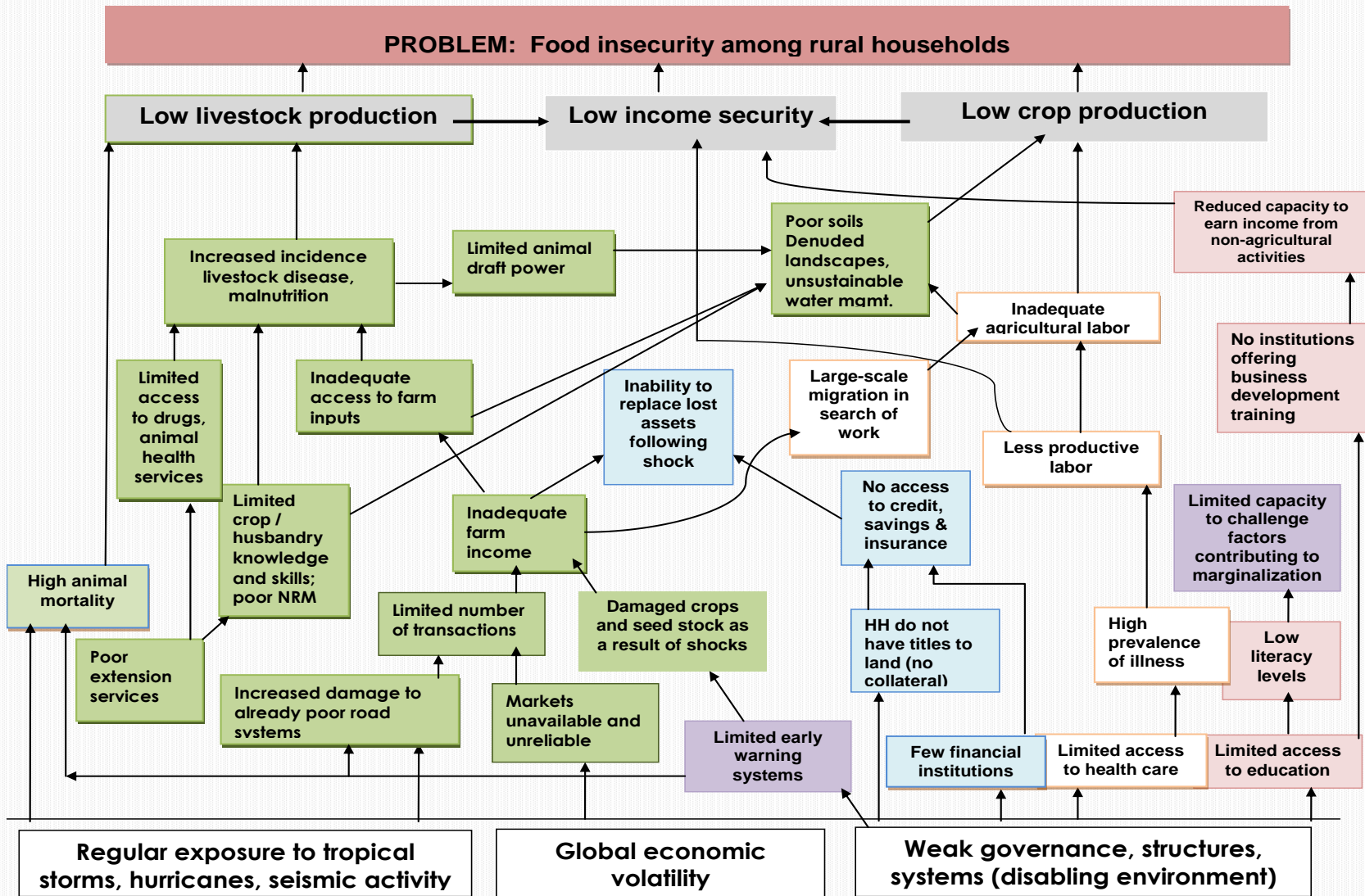
- **Start with a problem statement**

- Construct a problem tree
- Map the key underlying causes of the problem---- who, what, and where--some may be outside the scope of the project

- **Convert problem tree to desired goals**

DEVELOPING A PROBLEM TREE

Mapping causal streams and defining key underlying problems.

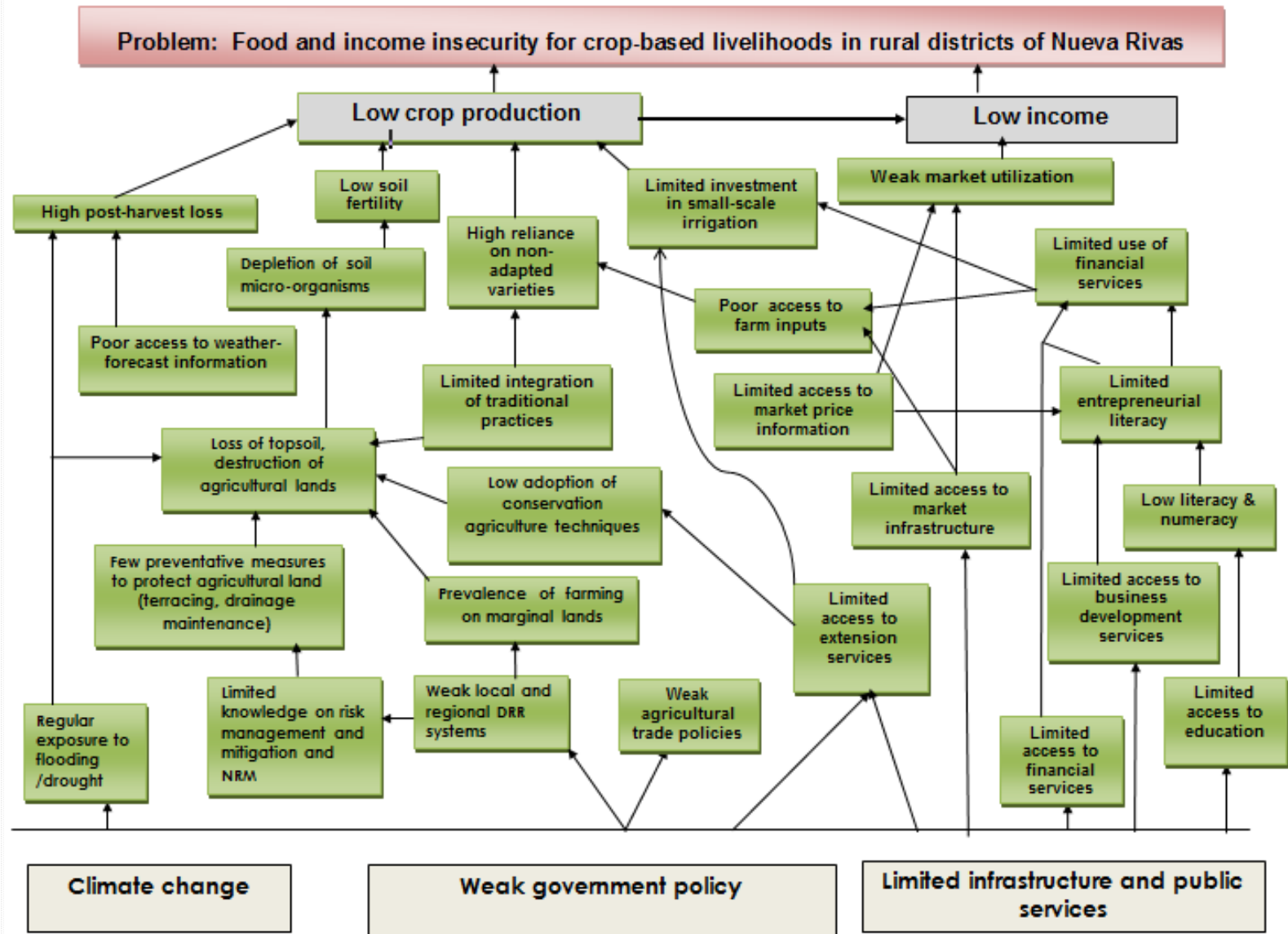


DEVELOPING A PROBLEM TREE

- **Identify key underlying causes** at the household, community, or external level
 - direct causes (specific conditions);
 - secondary causes (behaviors);
 - tertiary causes (knowledge levels, beliefs, practices).

Determine causes that **significantly contribute** to the problem and have **high synergy** with other underlying causes.

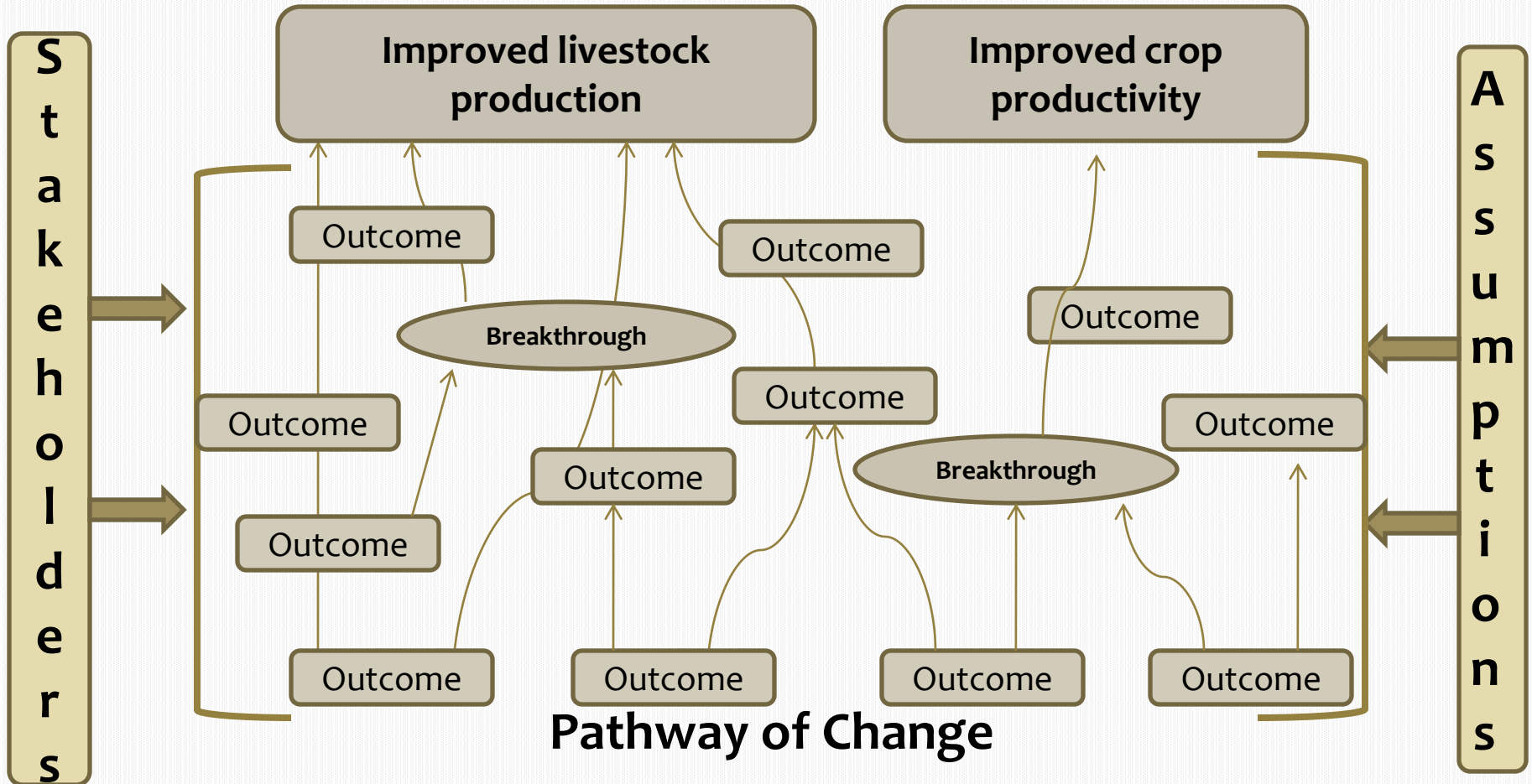
Identifying Underlying Causes and Causal Pathways



MAP A PATHWAY OF CHANGE

- Convert Problem Tree to a draft Theory of Change
 - key underlying causes into domains of change and causal pathways to pathways of change.
- Identify Domains of Change (key leverage points)
 - Main areas in which change must occur in order to be able to reach the desired long-term goal.
- Map *pathways of change*
 - series of major breakthroughs and related incremental changes that are needed within each domain of change in order to reach the desired long-term goal.
- This set of connected building blocks is interchangeably referred to as *outcomes, results, accomplishments, or preconditions*.
- A *breakthrough* is a change that represents a leap forward or an advance on the pathway of change that is not easily reversed.

Goal: Improved food security for rural households

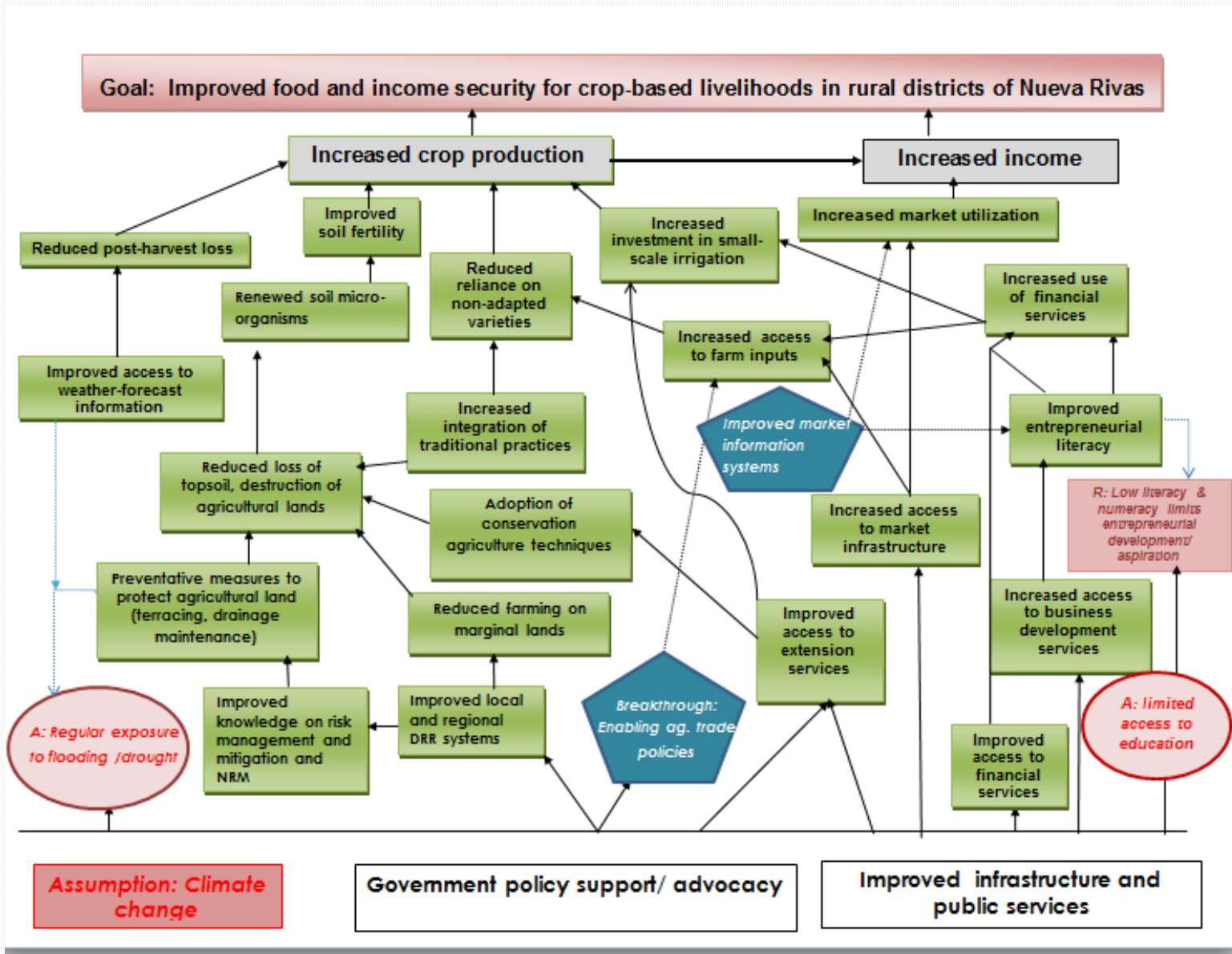


Problem: Food insecurity among poor rural households

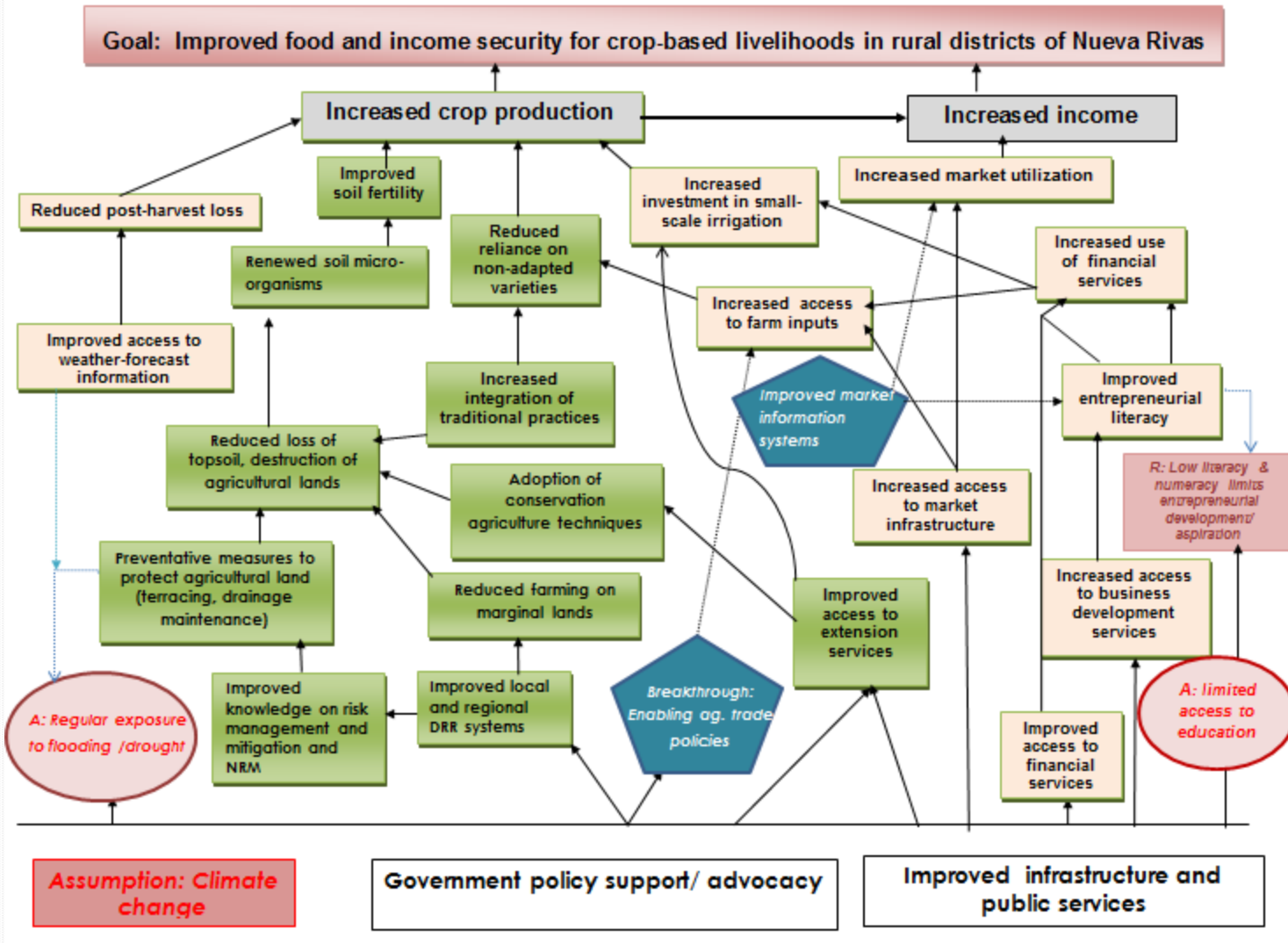
MAP A PATHWAY OF CHANGE

- The change pathways show the outcome that must be realized before the next higher outcome in the chain can be achieved.
- Numerous outcomes contribute to the long-term goal.
- Multiple pathways lead towards the long-term goal.
- This logic helps us to:
 - a) prioritize the outcomes and actions linked to each outcome
 - b) eliminate outcomes that may be desired but are unnecessary to achieve the goal.

Map a Pathway of Change



Determine pathways of direct focus



CHOOSING APPROPRIATE RESPONSES

- The ToC helps identify the most critical or strategic activities.
 - Based on assessments, best practices, lessons learned, evaluation reports, community inputs, research, institutional experience.
- Three components of the ToC process will help select appropriate responses: a thorough review of
 - **assumptions,**
 - **risks;**
 - **stakeholders'** interest and influence



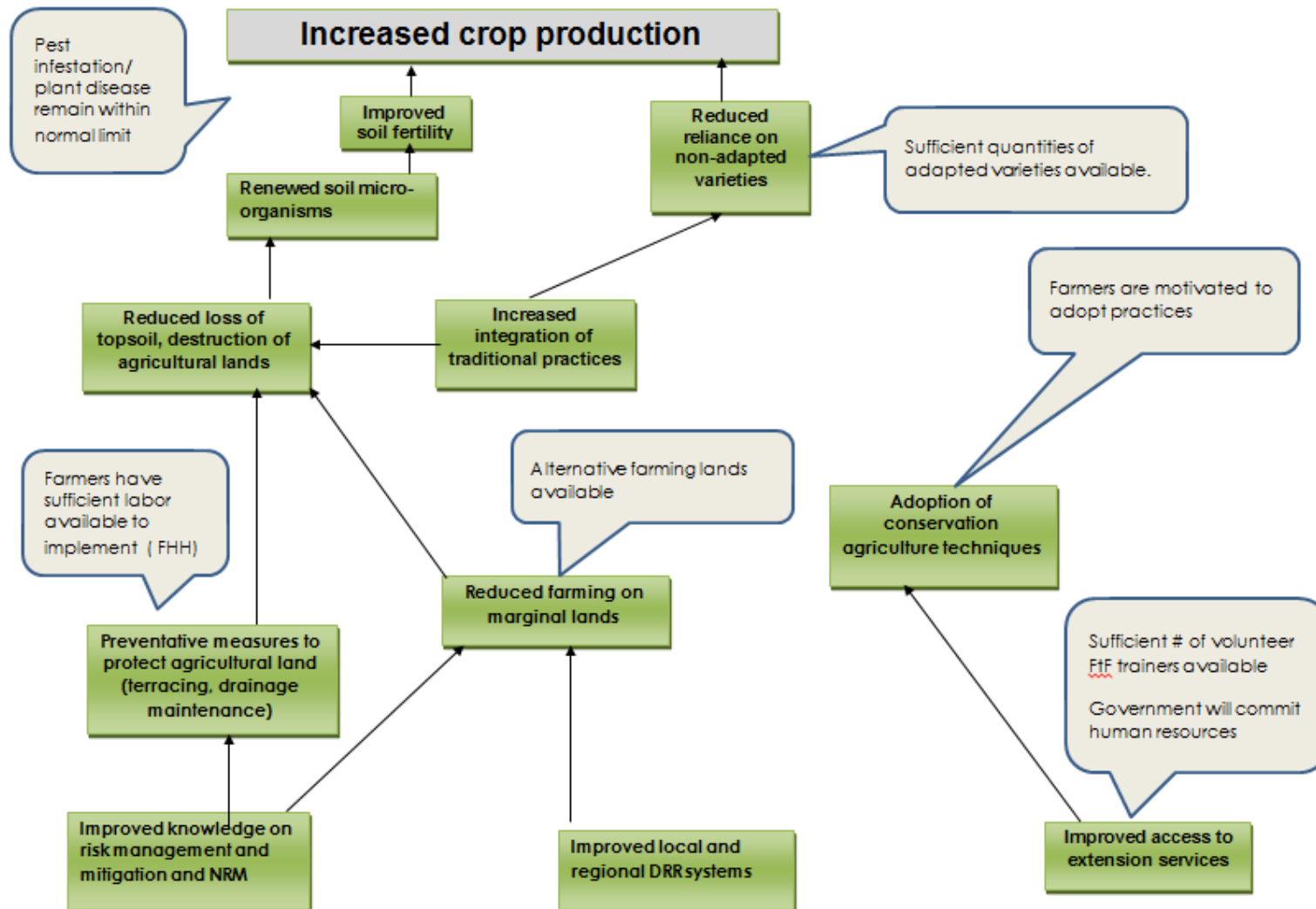
ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

- Conditions important to the success of a project, but beyond its control.
- Explain the connections between outcomes and key actions will bring them about.
- Use available evidence to support assumptions
- By identifying risks, you think about what might happen if your assumptions do not hold.
- Risks include external conditions that will affect the success of a program.
 - Unexpected market volatility; Change in government policy; Pest infestation beyond normal limits;



BREAKOUT OF ASSUMPTIONS

Goal: Improved food security for crop-based livelihoods in rural districts of Nueva Rivas



STAKEHOLDERS IN A TOC MODEL

Stakeholder analysis:

- Identify potential stakeholders and their level of interest
- Assess each stakeholder's power and influence and how this will impact program efforts
- Identify risks and assumptions related to stakeholder power and influence which will affect the success of program efforts
- Stakeholders can affect a project's outcome positively or negatively.

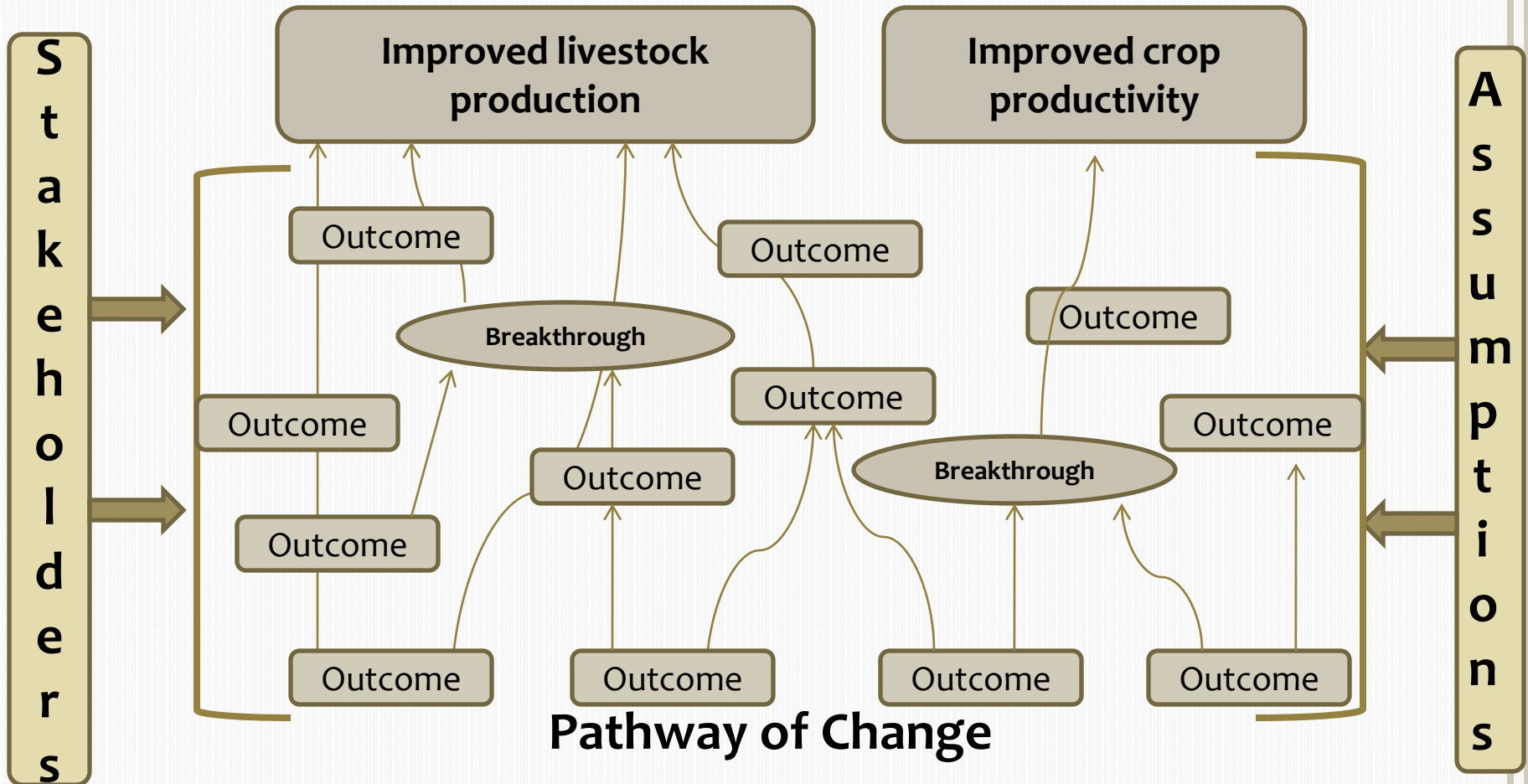


SUMMARY

A complete ToC model provides:

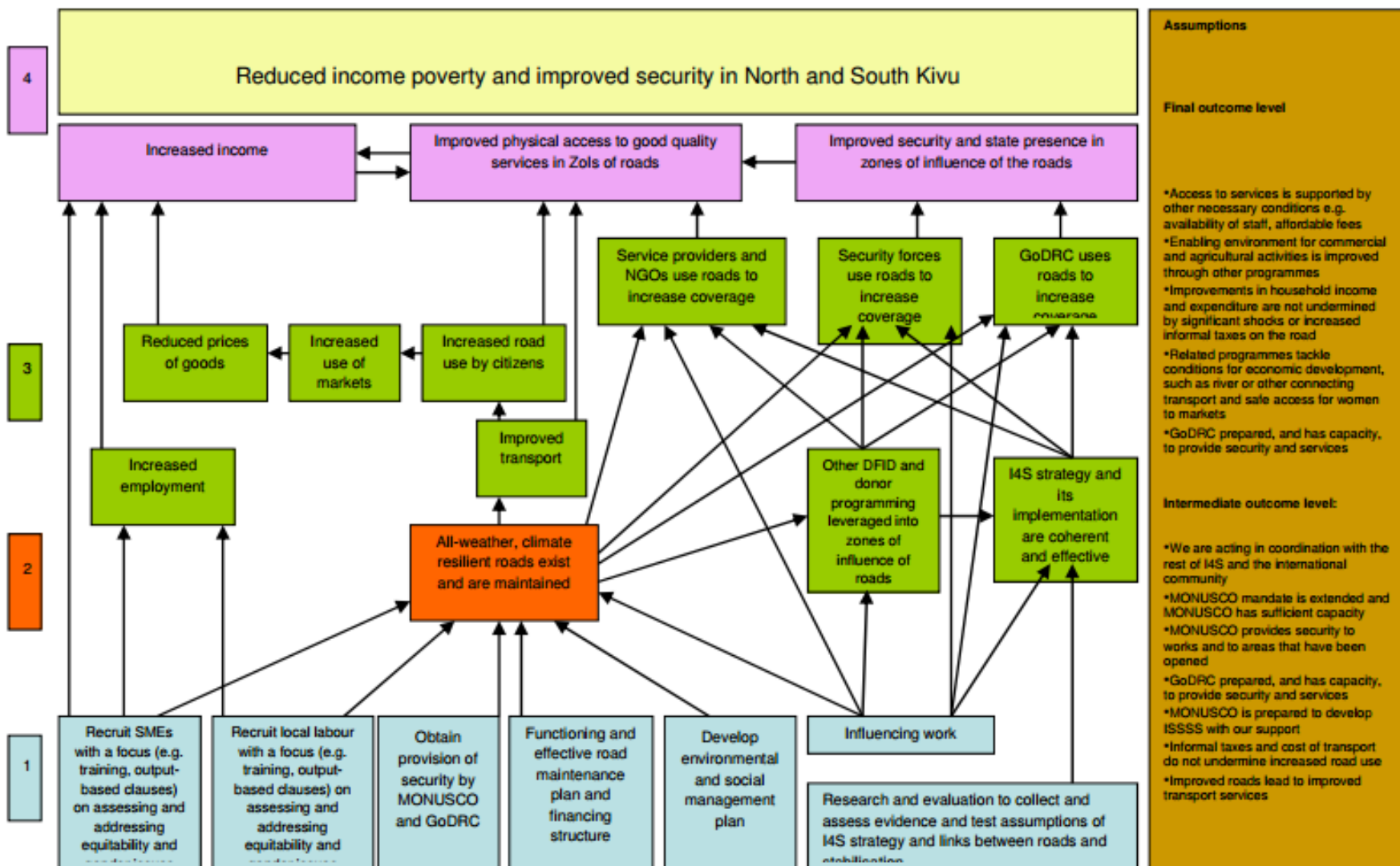
- A clear and testable hypothesis about how change will occur
- A visual representation of the expected change and how it will occur
- An agreement among stakeholders about what defines success and what it takes to achieve it
- A communication tool to capture the complexity of your initiative
- A blueprint for monitoring and evaluation

Goal: Improved food security for rural households



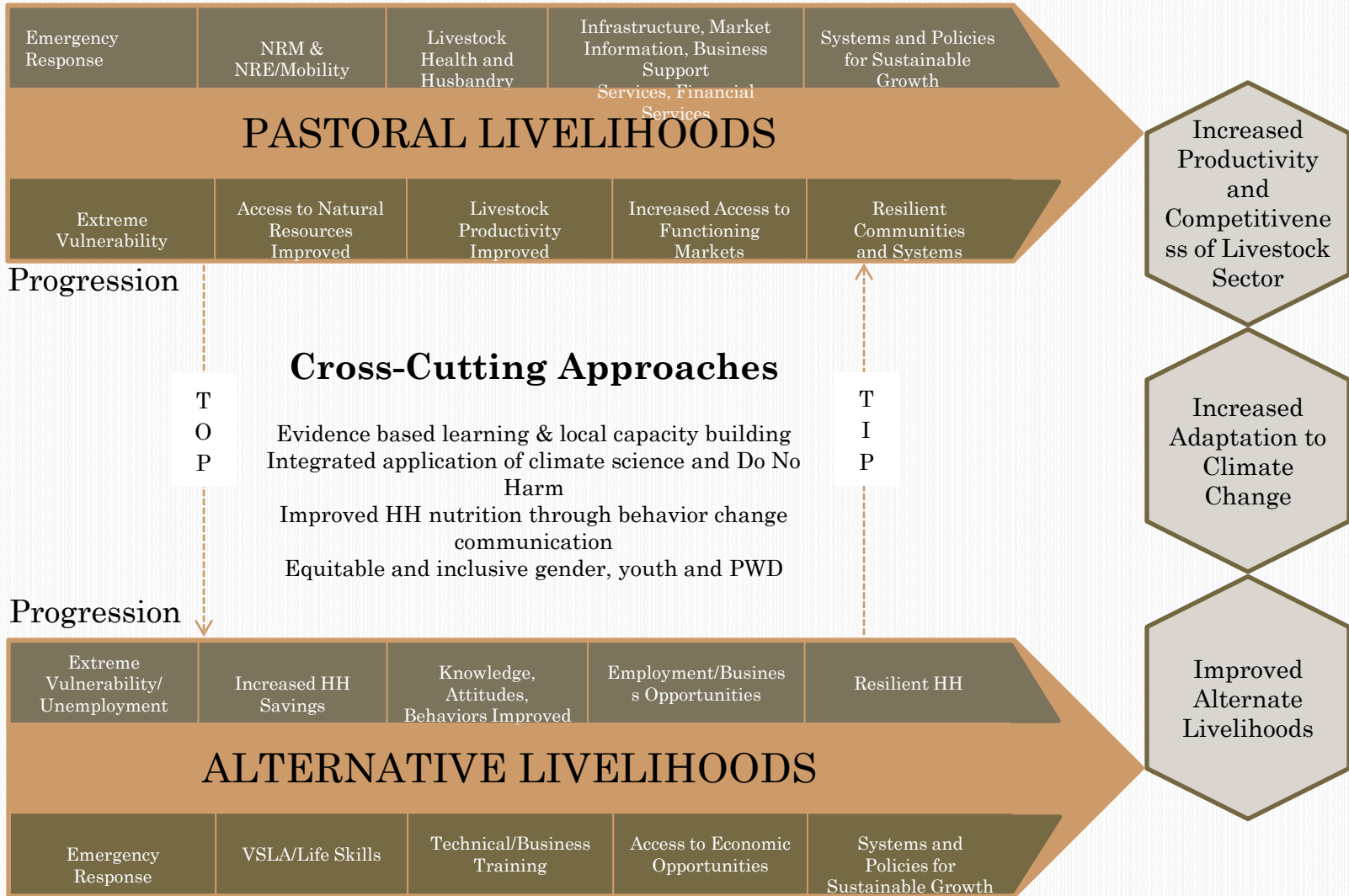
Problem: Food insecurity among poor rural households

Sample Theory of Change: DFID Roads in DRC



Sample Theory of Change: PRIME

PRIME Interventions



PRIME Interventions

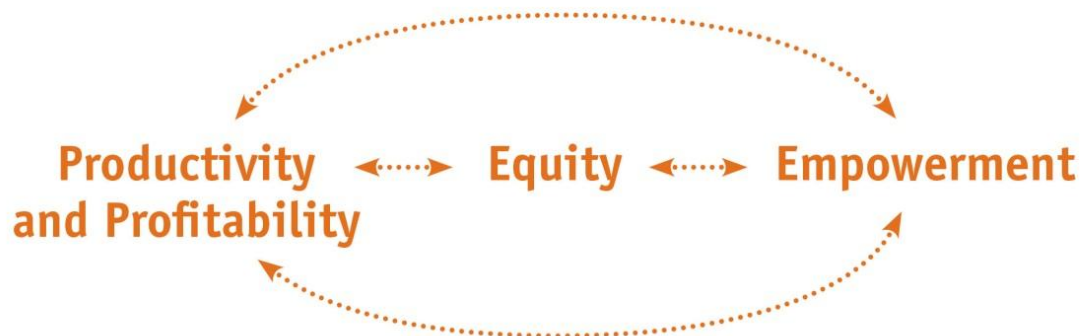
Increased HH income and enhances resilience to climate change through market linkages

Sample Theory of Change: CARE Pathways

CARE PATHWAYS THEORY OF CHANGE

More Secure and Resilient Livelihoods

Food and Nutrition Security, Coping and Adapting Ability



1 Capacity

CHANGE LEVEL

Knowledge, skills and relationships
Self-confidence and conviction of power

2 Access

CHANGE LEVEL

Access to productive resources, assets and markets appropriate and reliable services and input

3 Productivity

CHANGE LEVEL

Improved yields and income through the adoption of sustainable agriculture and value addition

4 Household Influence

CHANGE LEVEL

Contribution to and influence over income and decision-making

Enabling Environment

More positive and enabling attitudes, behaviors, social norms, policies and institutions

CHANGE LEVEL

5

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THANK YOU

