

Fostering successful scale up of normative change interventions

How Realist Evaluation Can Help



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Passages

Transforming Social Norms for
Sexual & Reproductive Health

REALIST EVALUATION ROOTS

Social Science Paradigms

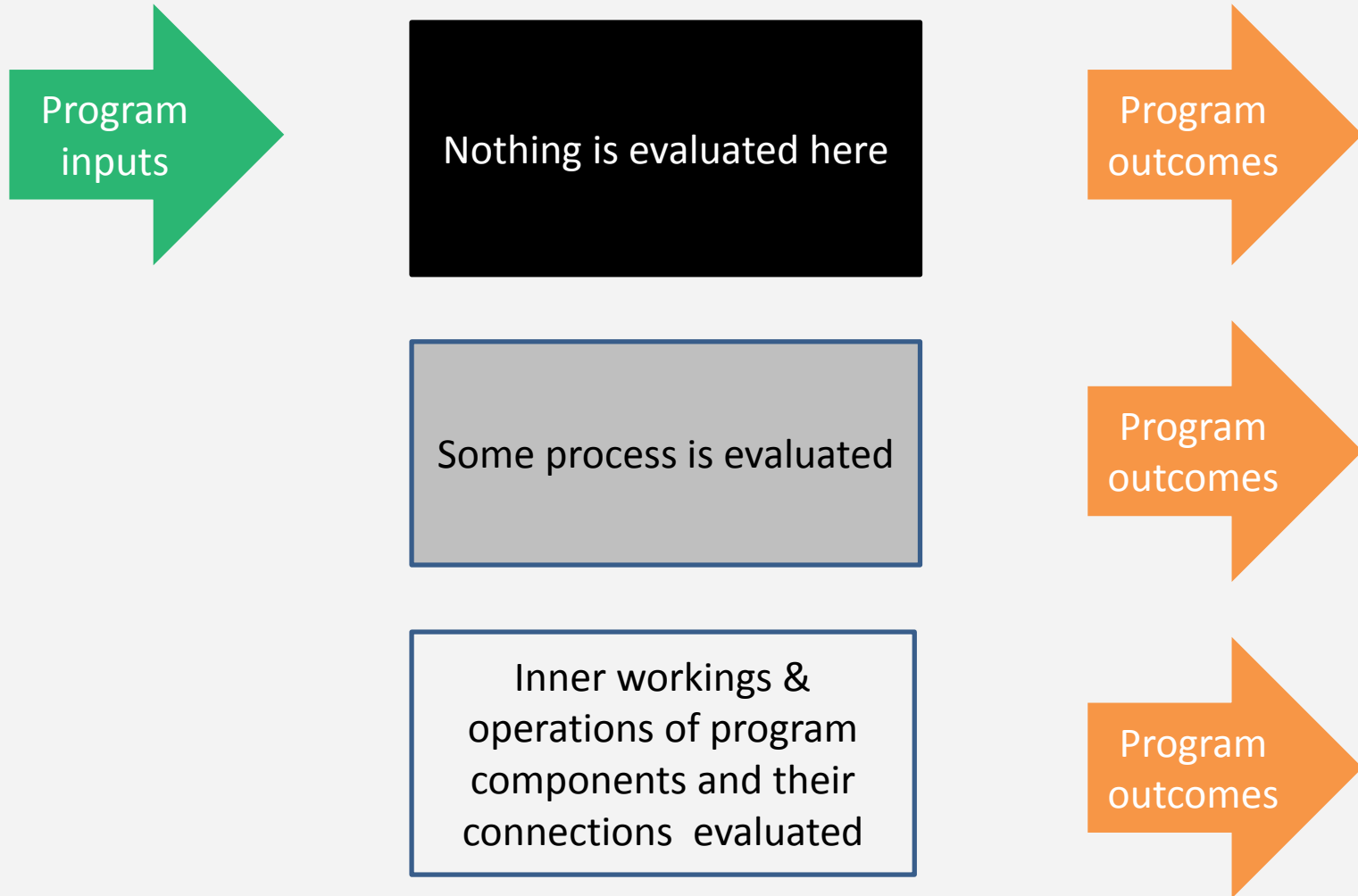


Positivism



Realism

These Perspectives Relate to Program Evaluation



**KEY PRINCIPLES
REALIST EVALUATION
APPROACH**

Key Principles of Realist Evaluation

The nature of programs:

- ✓ Programmes are 'embedded'
- ✓ Programmes are 'active'
- ✓ Programmes are 'theories'

Principal research tasks:

- ✓ Hypothesise the key mechanisms (M)
- ✓ Hypothesise the key contexts (C)
- ✓ Explain the outcome pattern (O)

Programs are “embedded”

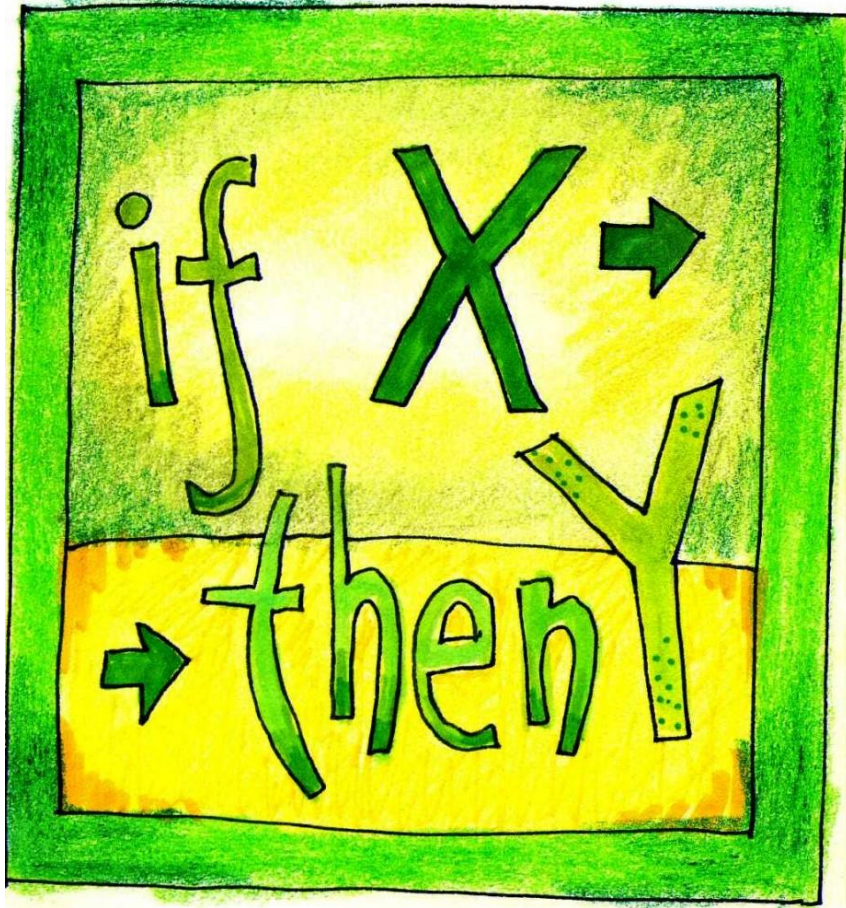
They are always inserted into pre-existing social systems



To work, preventive health initiatives need to operate at different levels:

- ✓ Ideas
- ✓ Individuals
- ✓ Institution
- ✓ Infrastructure

Programs are Theories



If we do to them,
they will change their
behavior in way.

Programs are “active”

They are ‘active’ in the sense that their intended effects work through the reasoning and volition of their subjects

Even ‘mechanical’ interventions like the free distribution of bed nets depend on the subject’s ideas.

Bed nets work but also end up:

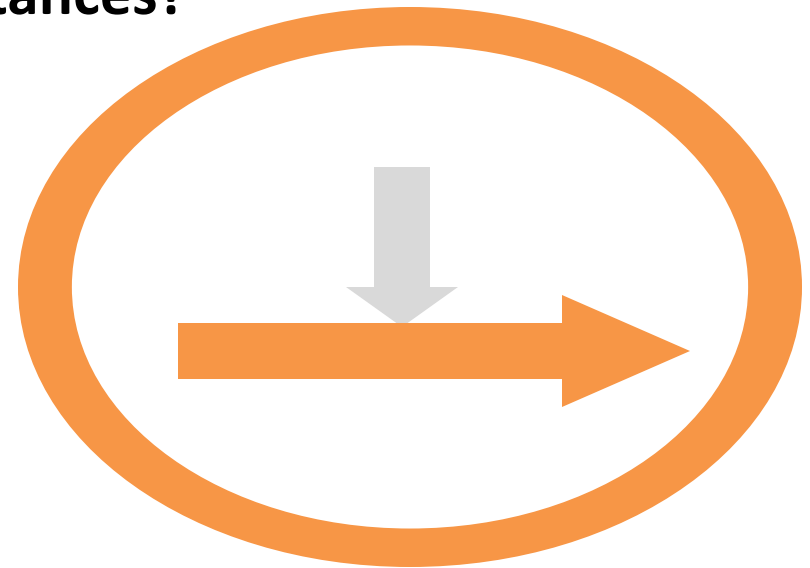
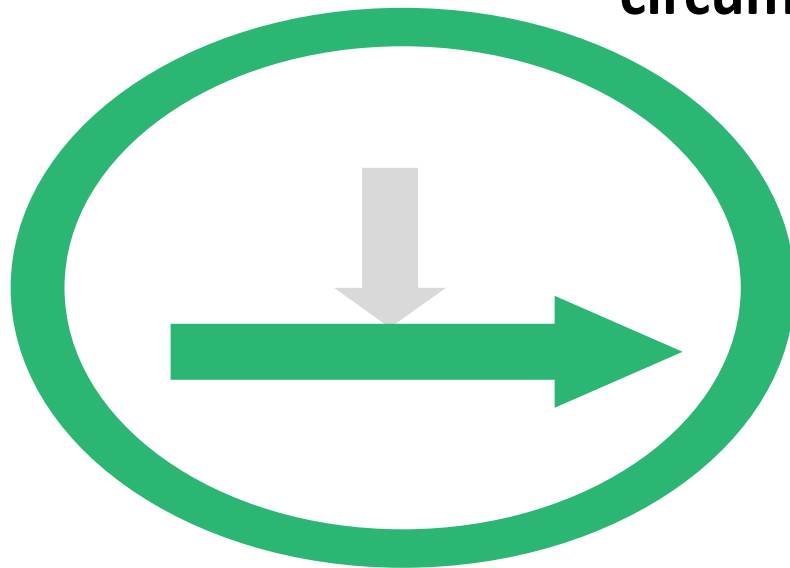
- ✓ Not installed (can’t be bothered)
- ✓ Removed (sleeping becomes too hot)
- ✓ Used differently (for Dads, not Moms & kids)
- ✓ ‘Walking’ (sold/exchanged for higher-value item)



Realist Evaluation: Mechanisms, Contexts & Outcomes

Don't ask 'what works?'

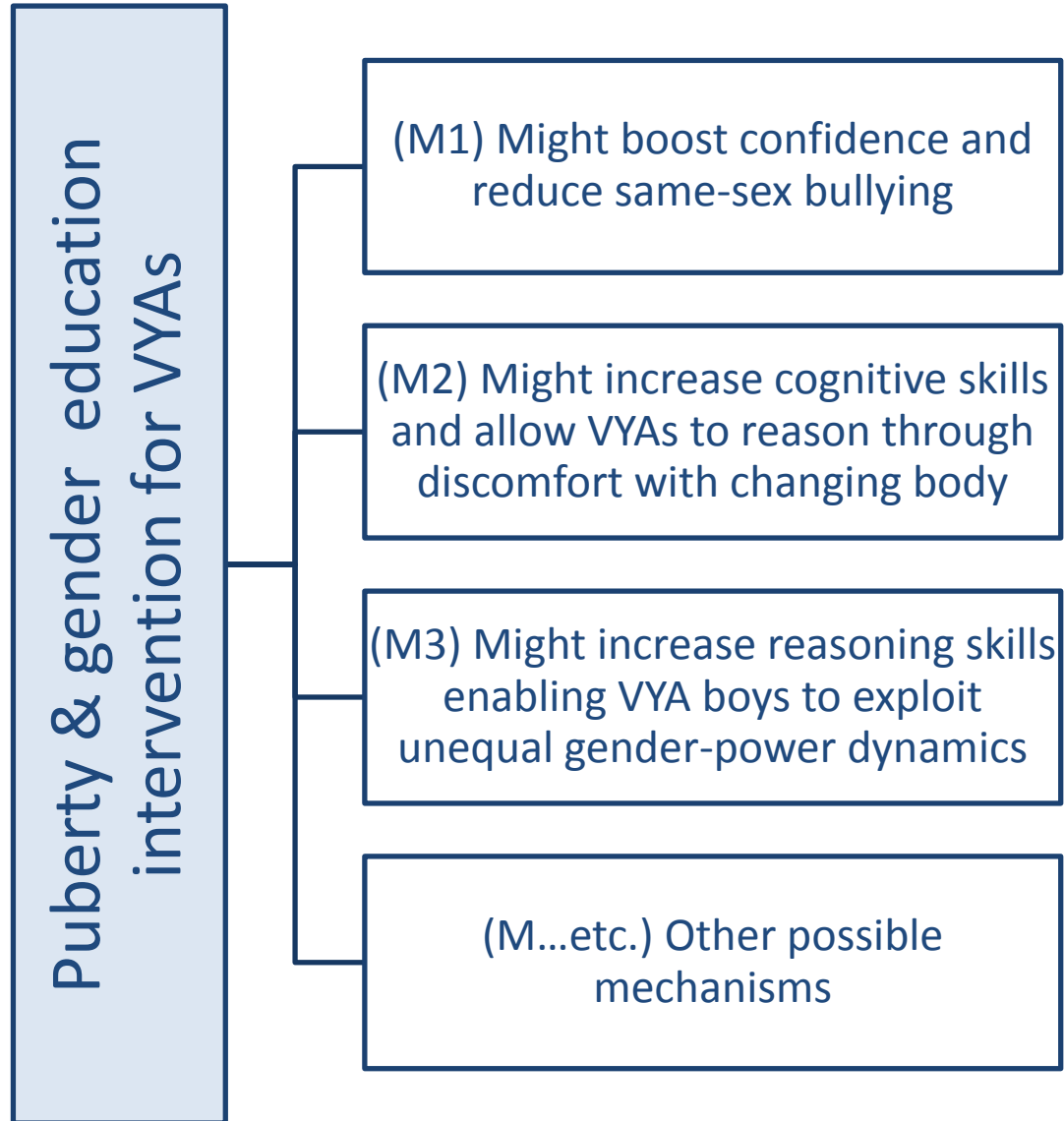
Rather, investigate: 'what works for whom in what circumstances?'



**The same program mechanism will have
different outcomes in different contexts**

Mechanisms ≠ Inputs or Activities

A mechanism represents the process of how 'beneficiaries' interpret and act upon the intervention



Contrasting views of “systematic reviews”

Meta-analysis perspective

- ✓ Programs have effects
- ✓ Evaluation measures effect sizes
- ✓ Systematic review seeks mean effect

The realist understanding:

- ✓ Programs are theories
- ✓ Evaluation is theory-testing
- ✓ Systematic review is theory-synthesis

“Realist review does not provide simple answers to complex questions. It will not tell policy-makers or managers whether something works or not, but it will provide the policy and practice community with the kind of rich, detailed and highly practical understanding of complex social interventions, which is likely to be of much more use to them when planning and implementing programmes at a national, regional or local level.”

DEVELOPING PROGRAM THEORY

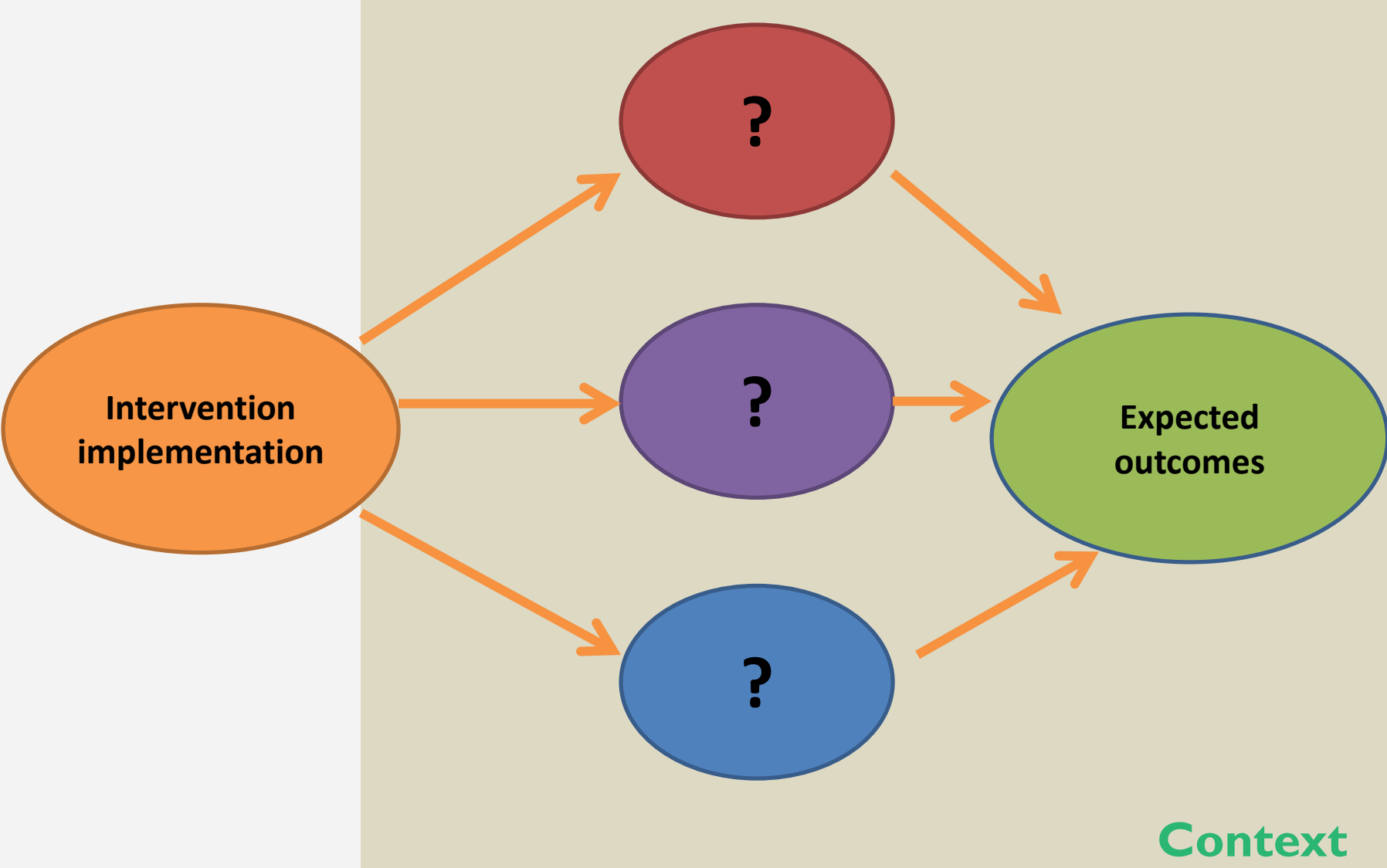
Basic Process

1 - Make explicit through diagramming and discussion, how an intervention is linked to outcomes.

2 - Elicit underlying mechanisms, intermediate effects, and assumptions. (alternative mechanisms?)

3 - Develop/test theory using existing program data, conducting additional studies *and* discussions with different stakeholder groups (designers, implementers, 'beneficiaries')

Mechanisms






Tékponon Jikuagou Leveraging Social Connections to Spark Family Planning Use



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TÉKPONON JIKUAGOU
INSTITUTE FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
CARE INTERNATIONAL
PLAN INTERNATIONAL



Why we used an
realist evaluation
approach to
articulate a
program change
theory

MIDWAY THROUGH PILOT PHASE

- ✓ Common understanding of how implementation of the TJ package of interventions leads to expected changes in results framework.
- ✓ Identifying additional evaluation questions for the pilot endline
- ✓ For pilot project documentation, so program theory can be tested at scale
- ✓ Talking with new user organizations about TJ package

INTERVENTION COMPONENTS

- 1 ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN SOCIAL MAPPING



- 2 SUPPORT INFLUENTIAL GROUPS IN REFLECTIVE DIALOGUE



- 3 ENCOURAGE INFLUENTIAL INDIVIDUALS TO ACT



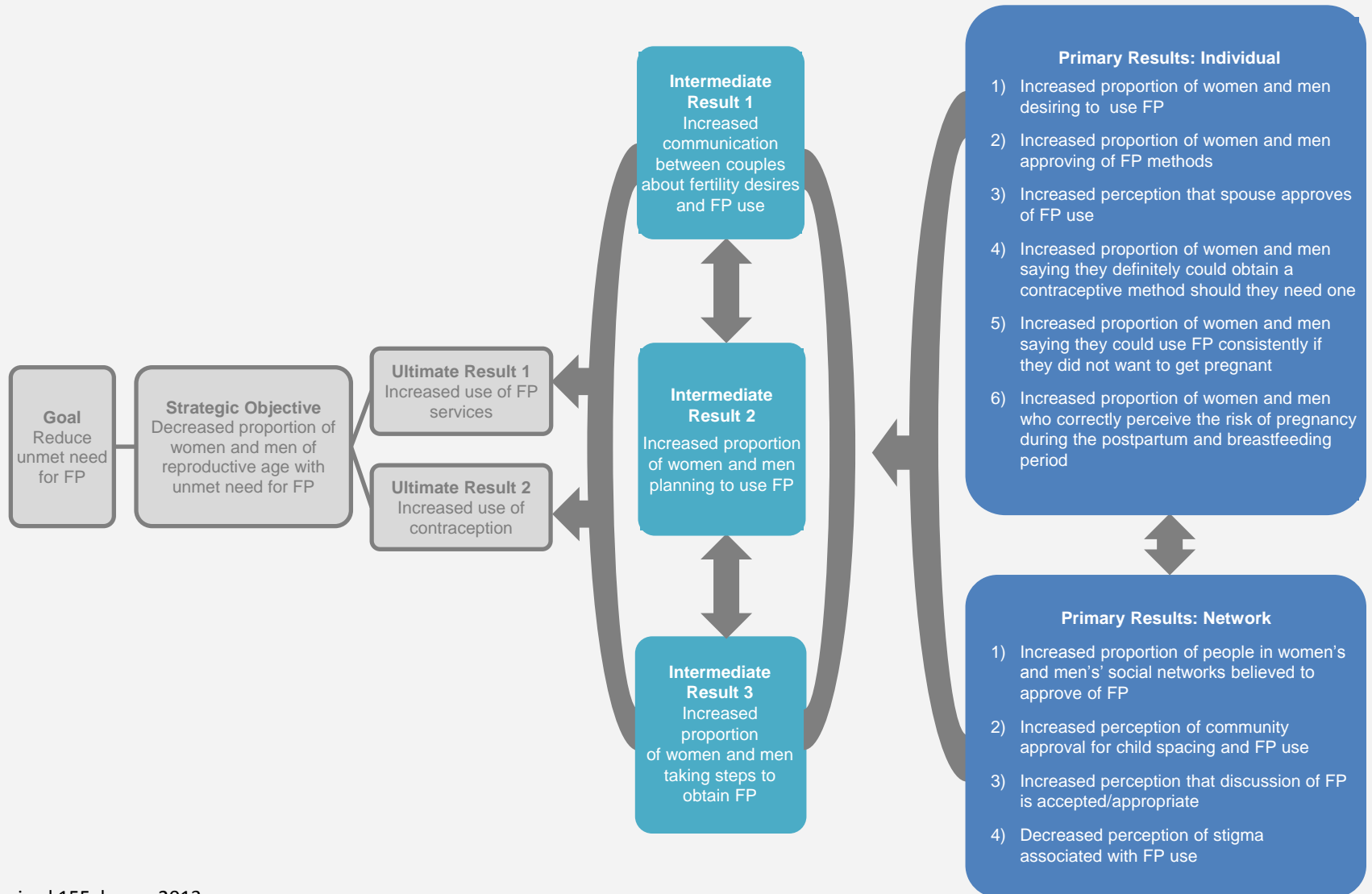
- 4 USE RADIO TO CREATE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT



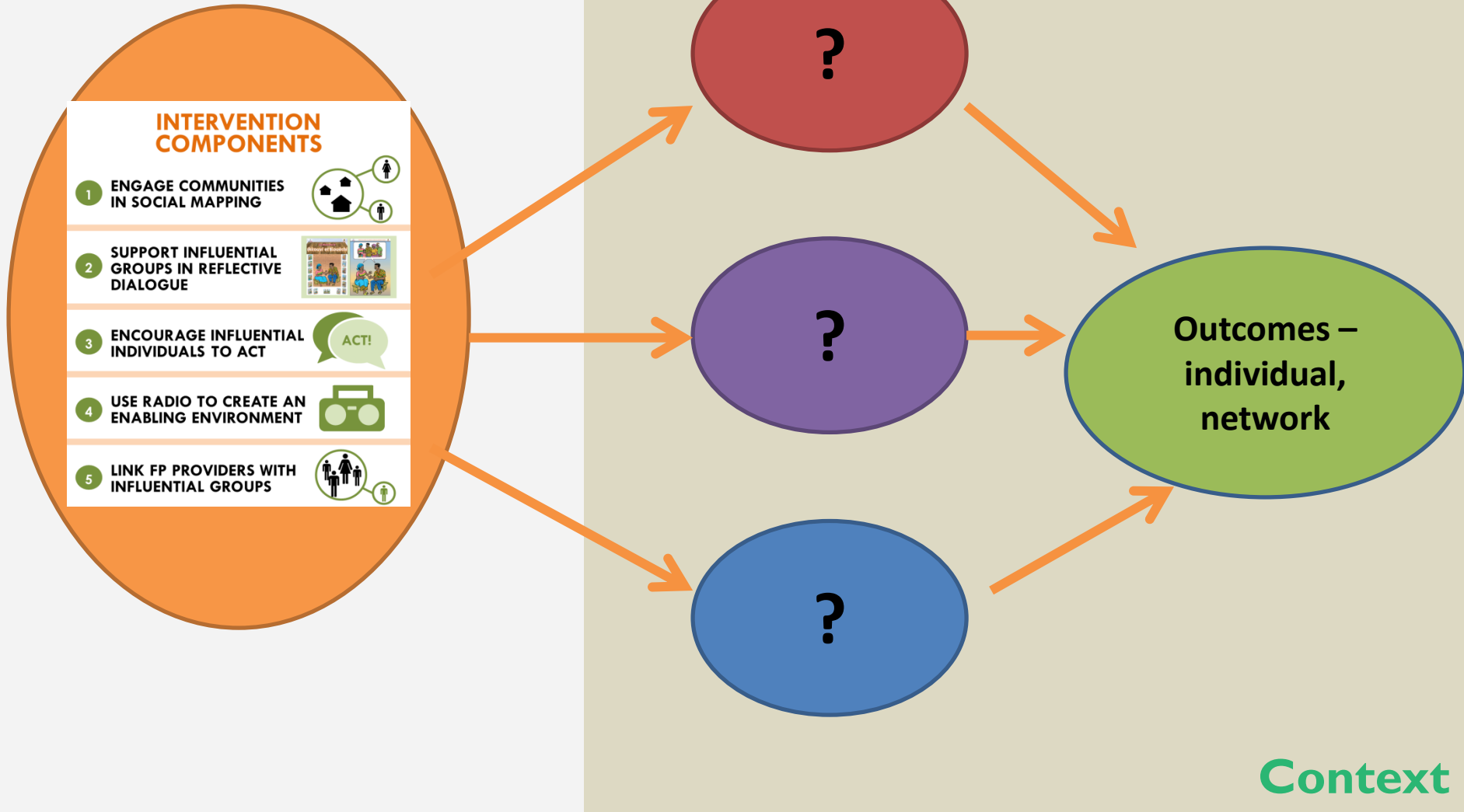
- 5 LINK FP PROVIDERS WITH INFLUENTIAL GROUPS

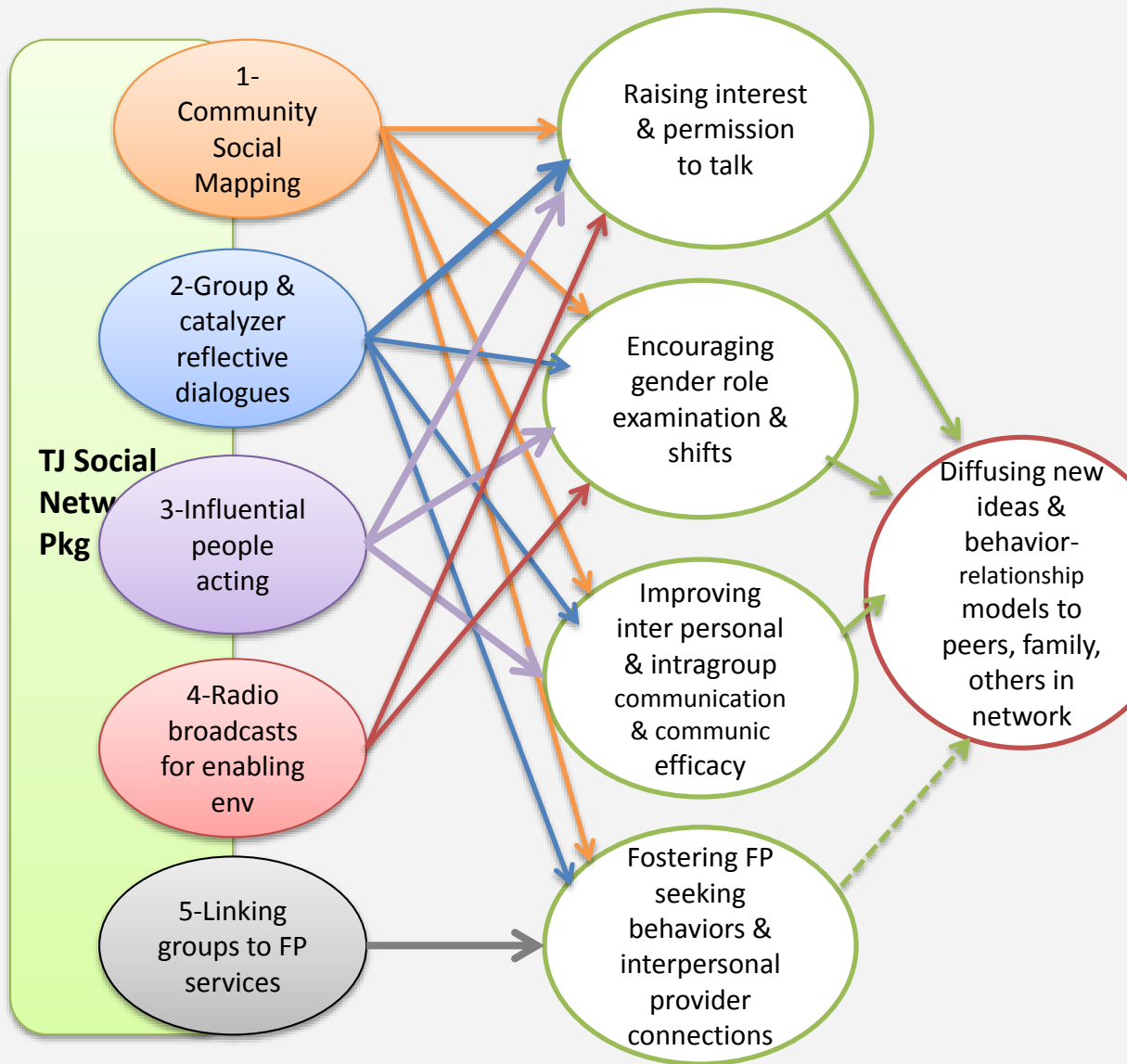


Project's Results Framework



Mechanisms





Outcomes - Results Framework

Individual change

↑ women & men...

- approve of FP methods
- perceive spouse approves FP use
- could seek FP method if needed

Network change

↑ women & men perceiving others in their networks...

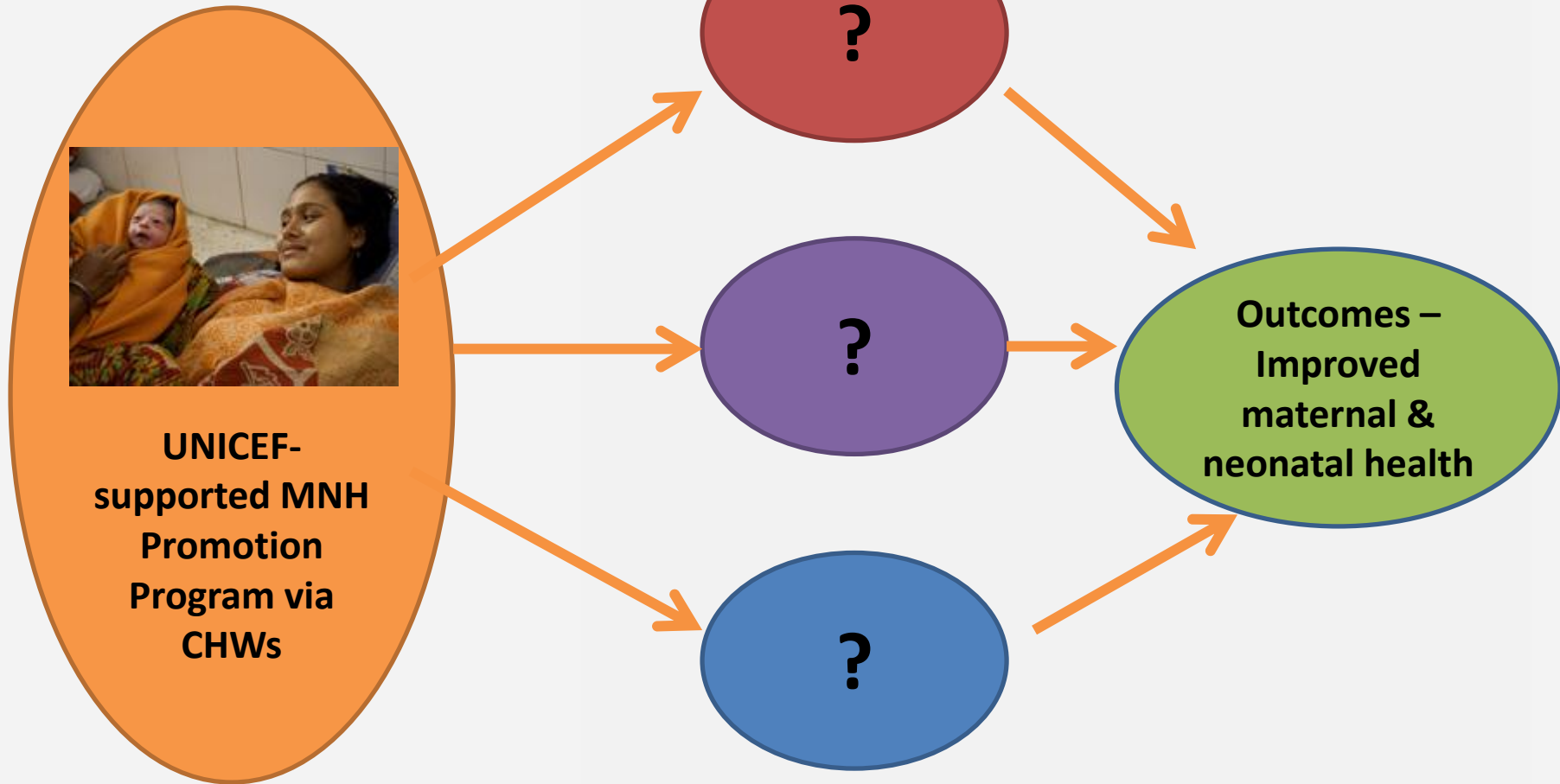
- approve of FP and FP use
- believe FP discussions appropriate
- believe FP stigma is reducing

Downstream change

- ↑ women & men desire FP use
- ↑ couple communication
- ↑ women & men taking steps to obtain FP

Mechanisms

REALIST EVALUATION FROM BANGLADESH



CMO configurations

Context

Communities have limited access to formal health facilities/care and limited awareness of MNH care practices and danger signs.

Women in communities feel isolated from health services and intimidated by providers

Women have few opportunities for financial and social empowerment

CHWs working in rural, isolated areas have limited resources to support their work.

Mechanisms

- CHWs proactively engage in health issues with communities, which in turn, shifts community perceptions of facility services.

-CHWs develop self-efficacy and pride in their efforts, which is reinforced in turn, by community respect for their efforts.

-Training and outreach support from the MNH program makes CHWs feel accountable for their outreach efforts.

Outcomes

Community women are more likely to seek facility care—in contradiction to prevalent practice of home delivery.

Outreach programme continues to function at scale, most CHWs remain engaged for the long-term.

Without active CHWs, health system suffers, as the programme model is not put into place, and many women never hear health promotion messages.

REALIST EVALUATION IN PASSAGES

What can realist evaluation contribute to scale up of norms interventions?

- ✓ Theories of change guide scale up
 - For new user organizations
 - Serving as a fidelity check during scale up
- ✓ Developing theories of change can help identify missing indicators and evidence prior to scale up
- ✓ Multiple interventions with multiple theories of change can help identify important norms intervention mechanisms and contexts ==> grounded theory development

Let's try it!

- Men, masculinities, and FP
- Growing up GREAT

20 minutes to discuss

After listening to a description of each intervention, choose an intervention and discuss in a group:

1- What might be critical contextual factors that will affect the pilot and scale-up of the intervention?

2- What mechanisms appear to be critical in leading to successful normative change?

Closing Thoughts

- ✓ Passages is not only testing individual interventions, but contributing to building knowledge about norms interventions and their scale up
- ✓ Theory development a critical element to guide scale up
- ✓ Applying realist inquiry's distinctive understanding of causality will yield multiple C-M-O program theories and contribute to grounded theory development (Pawson et al 2005)