TOOLS USED IN NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Conceptual – Results Chains
- Collection and Decision-making

Some simple definitions - Monitoring, Evaluation, Needs Assessment

- **Monitoring**
  - Continuous or regular collection and analysis of information about implementation to review progress. (Internal)
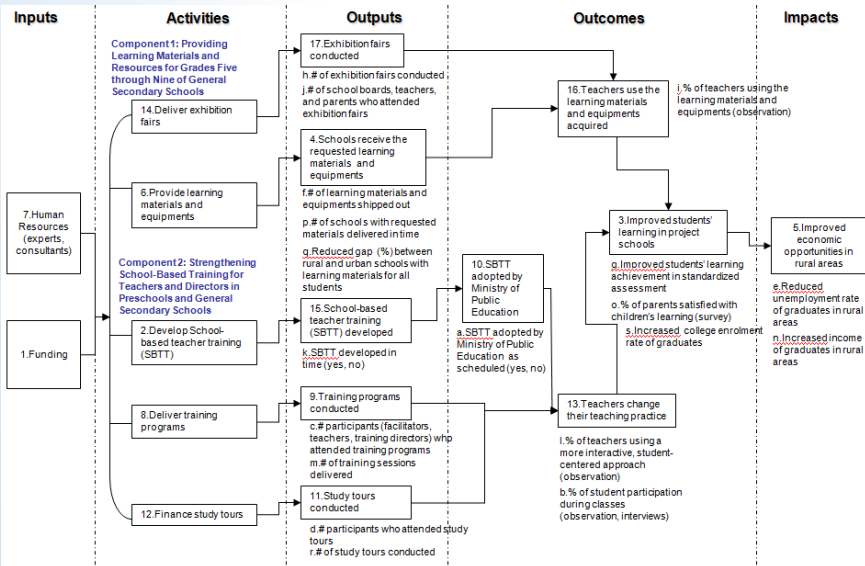
- **Evaluation**
  - A periodic assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of an intervention. A systematic search for answers about an intervention. (Internal or external)

- **Needs Assessment**
  - A process for identifying and prioritizing gaps in results based on the cost to meet the need versus the cost to ignore the need. Occurs in decision and design stages. Serves as an input for other M&E purposes. (Internal or external)

Results Chain – An important conceptual tool

- Many applications: planning, NA, monitoring and evaluation.

- Also known as logic models, results frameworks, outcome mapping tools and so on.

- They often vary by agencies, but generally serve the same purpose.

- Some are in the forms of diagrams and others in tables. Or you can use them in combination to feature certain aspects.

Results Chains (or Logic Models) and Needs Assessments

Impacts — If these benefits to stakeholders are achieved, then certain changes in society, organizations, communities, or systems might be expected to occur.

Outcomes — If you accomplish your planned activities to the extent you intended, then your beneficiaries/stakeholders/organization will benefit in certain ways.

Outputs — If you accomplish your planned activities, then you will hopefully deliver the amount of product and/or service that you intended.

Activities — If you have access to them, then you can use inputs to accomplish your planned activities.

Inputs — Certain inputs (resources) are needed to operate your program

Note that some of your results could be negative, for example, increased manufacturing output could lead to both economic improvements (positive) and more pollution (negative).

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Adapted from Kellogg Foundation's Logic Model Development Guide

Results Chains
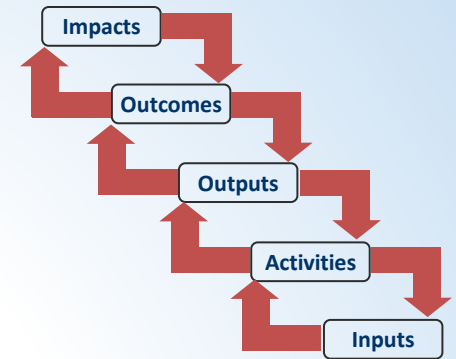
- Guide the alignment of programmatic goals with the questions the needs assessment is going to help answer.

- Link programmatic goals to the specific data collection tools (e.g., interview or survey questions) that will be used or developed.

- Lead the analysis and synthesis of needs assessment findings in relation to future programmatic decision-making.

- Align program decisions with later evaluations.

Finding Direction

"Well, lemme think. ... You've stumped me, son. Most folks only wanna know how to go the other way."
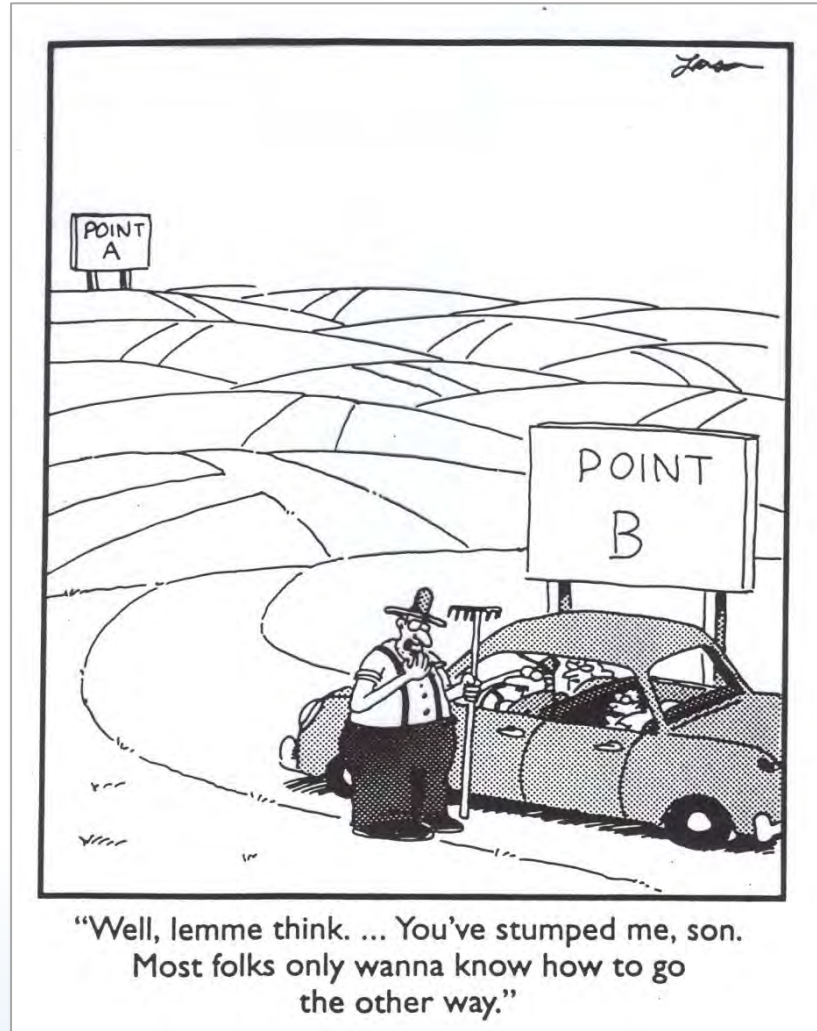
How the Results Chain is used in NA and M&E

Impacts — Plan → Outcomes — Plan → Outputs — Plan → Activities — Plan → Inputs

Measure (from Outcomes to Impacts) · Measure (from Outputs to Outcomes) · Measure (from Activities to Outputs) · Measure (from Inputs to Activities)

Needs Assessment

Monitoring & Evaluation

Your intended results

Your planned work

Results Chains

Impacts

Outcomes

Outputs

Going for training, writing reports, hiring staff, providing funds, mentoring others, writing learning plans, managing a project, etc.

Inputs

Your intended results

Your planned work

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Needs Assessments and Results Chains

Current Results
The Results We Are Accomplishing

Desired Results
The Results We Should Be Accomplishing

Impacts	Gap	Impacts
Outcomes	Gap	**Outcomes**
Outputs	Gap	**Outputs**
Activities	↔	Activities
Inputs	↔	Inputs

Needs Assessments and Results Chains
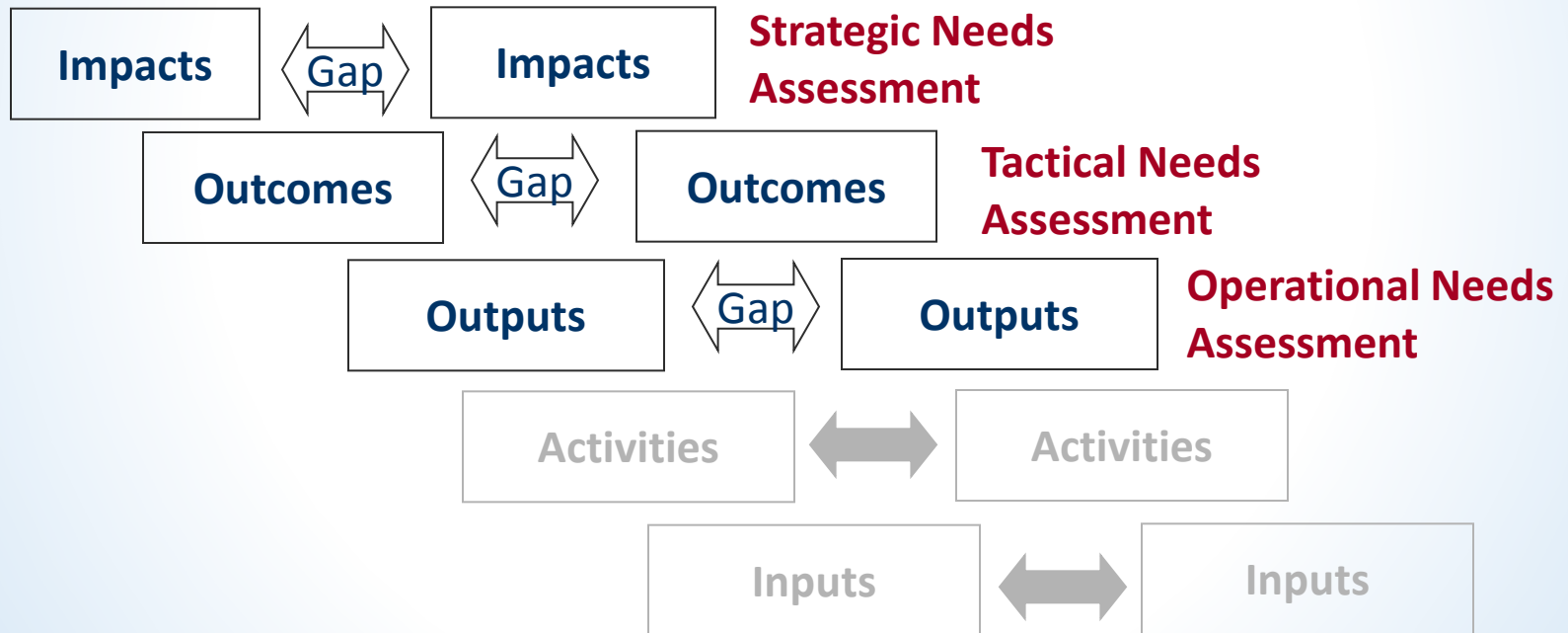
Needs Assessments and Results Chains
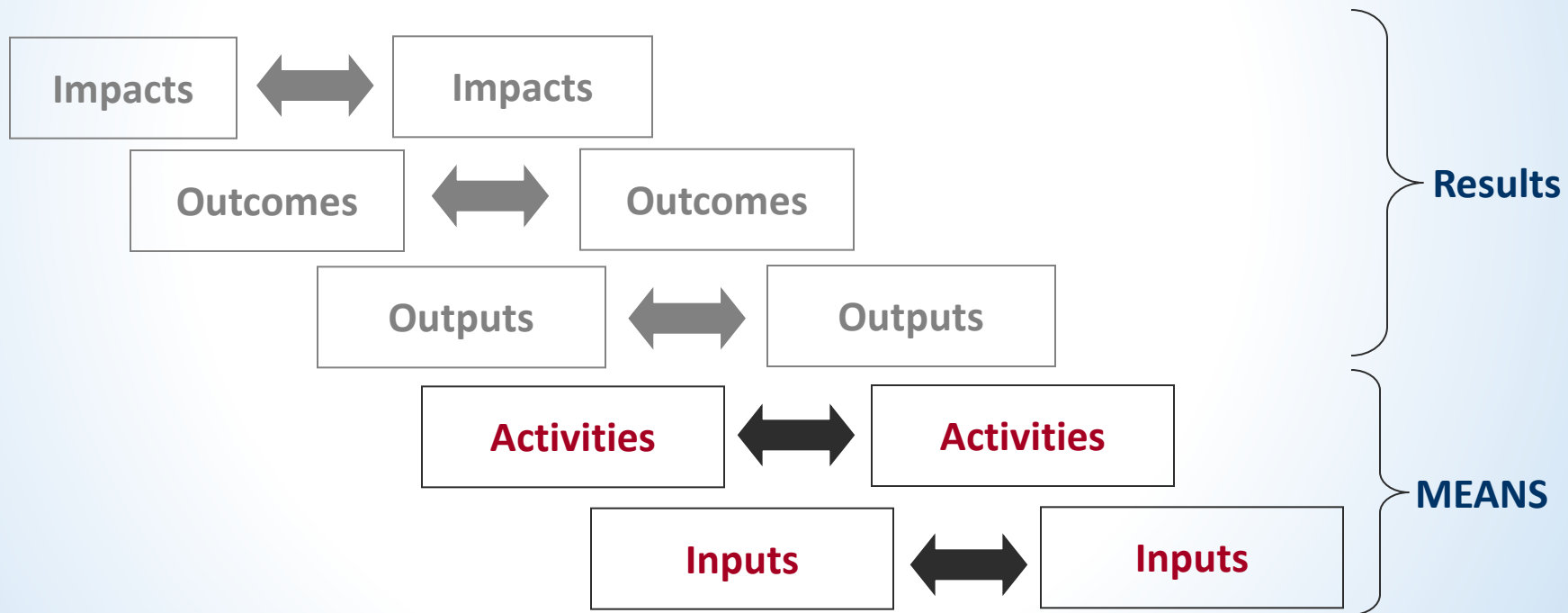
No more starting with…

- We need a project on…
- You need to buy the latest release of…
- We need a course on…
- They need a new attitude about…
- You should…
- They really have to…

Now you start with…

- Our organization requires staff to complete a project completion within two weeks of final client sign-off, but it is currently taking nearly four weeks, what can we do to improve this?

- A client will implement a new procurement process starting next year, how can our organization ensure that we are ready and will not lose any business?

- **Yes, and…**

Needs Rather than Wants

- Why not just ask them what they want?
  - Should we invest more community clinics or homeless shelters?
  - What training would be most useful for staff next year?
- Do not offer commonality for comparing, prioritizing, or selecting
- Henry Ford reportedly quipped, "If I had asked my customers what they wanted, they would have said, 'a faster horse.'"

Needs Assessments

Needs Assessments

WHAT ← | → **WHAT**

Current Impacts ←— **NEED** —→ **Desired Impacts**

Current Outcomes ←— **NEED** —→ **Desired Outcomes**
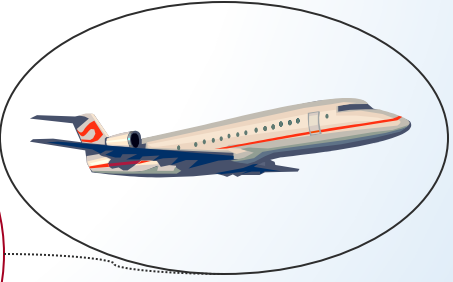
Current Outputs ←— **NEED** —→ **Desired Outputs**

Needs

Needs are gaps in RESULTS (not gaps in resources or activities)

Needs
(gaps)

Process to achieve desired results

Current Results
or
What is (WI)

Desired/Required Results
or
What should be (WSB)
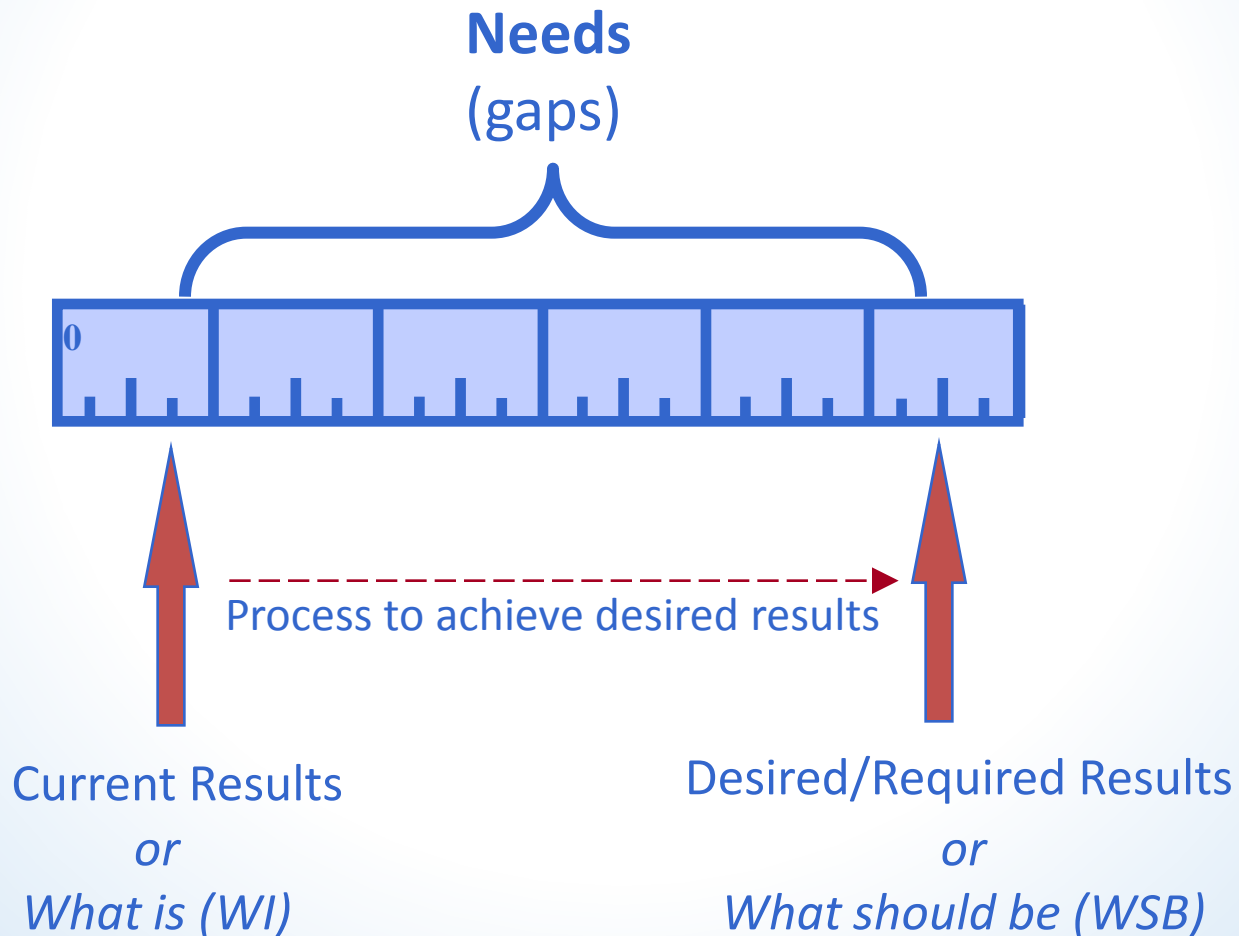
Needs at Each Level

Needs

Process or Resource

Means

Current Results

Desired/Required Results

Needs (an example)

Need

ACTIVITIES
Training, job aid, mentoring, policy shifts, or other tools

Current Results

Desired Results
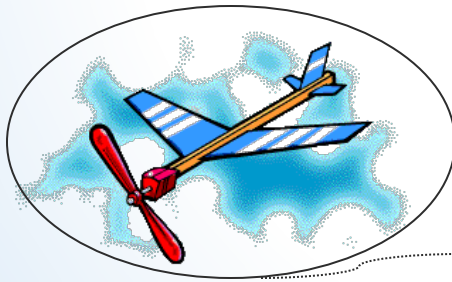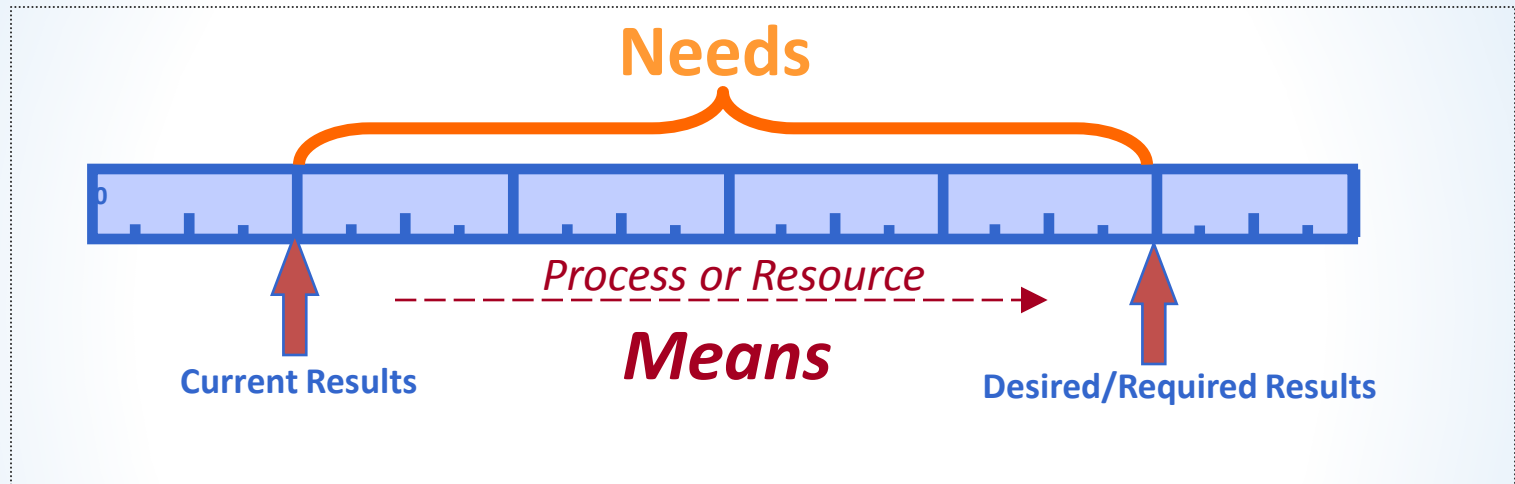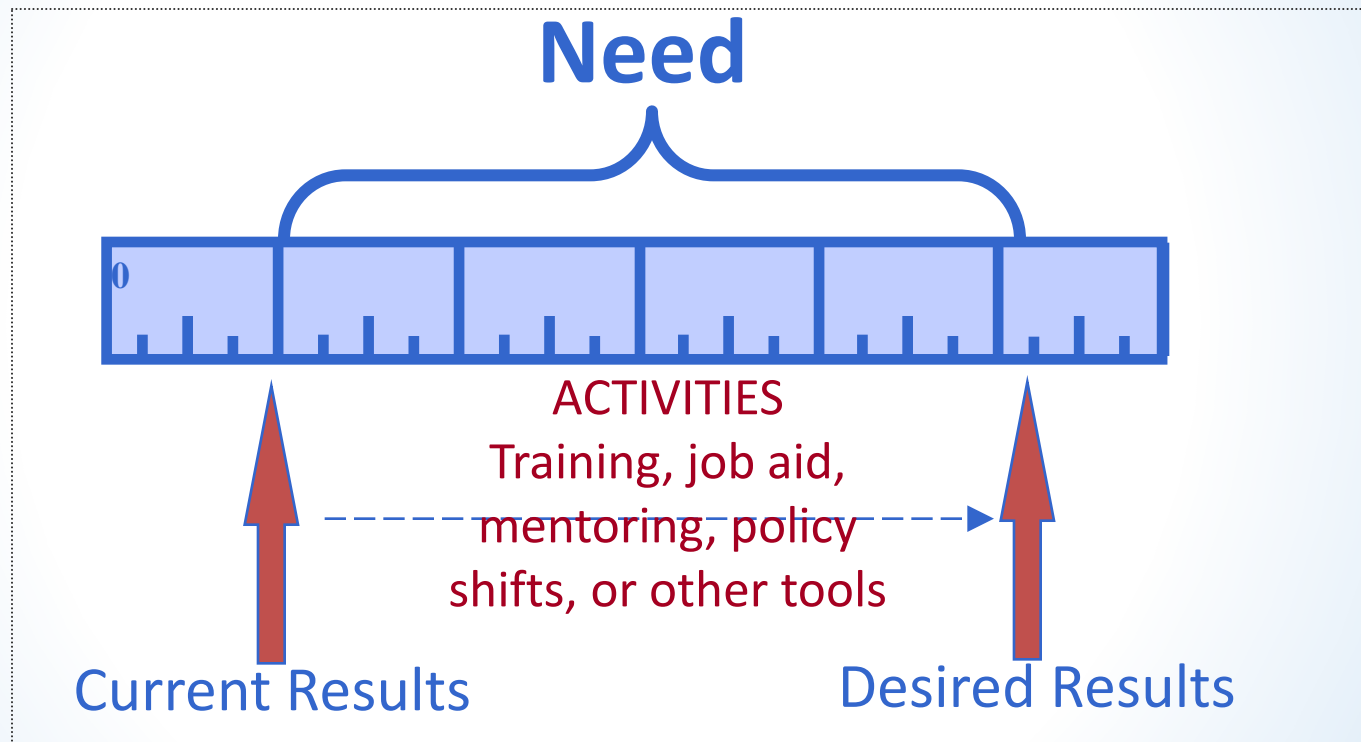
Only 40% of projects are completed on time and within budget

90% of projects are completed on time and within budget

Needs & Capabilities

- Amartya Sen
  - What matters is what people are/can do (or are capable of doing)
  - For example, the ability to live to old age, engage in economic transactions, or participate in political activities

- Five components in assessing capability:
  - The importance of real freedoms in the assessment of a person's advantage
  - Individual differences in the ability to transform resources into valuable activities
  - The multi-variate nature of activities giving rise to happiness
  - A balance of materialistic and nonmaterialistic factors in evaluating human welfare
  - Concern for the distribution of opportunities within society

Wikipedia has a useful introductory description of the Capability Approach

Needs & Capabilities

- Capabilities contrasts resource-based approaches
  - Property rights, income, assets, etc.
  - For example, differing income may be required to participate in political processes in different countries
  - Traditional definitions equate basic needs to satisfiers or resources (food, water, etc.)

- Capabilities complement, rather than contrast, needs when defined as gaps in results
  - What results will be achieved when people have the capability to engage in economic transactions? Or participate in political activities?

Needs & Assets

Assets

- represent what is **currently available** in an organization, community, or society to achieve results
  - Money, volunteers, non-profits, policies, etc.
  - Latent capacity may also exist
- can be **individual** (e.g., skills or experience of residents) or **organizational** (e.g., health clinics)
- can provide a **valuable context for setting priorities and selecting among options**
- can generate "home grown" **solutions**
- can acknowledge **what is working**