

# Measuring the impact of human rights projects

## Experiences and Challenges

**Taller Costa Rica 2014**

Projector version

# Structure

1. Planning the processes of change
2. Challenges due to project logic – emblematic cases
3. Data collection: risks for human rights activists? Ethical considerations
4. Some observations...

# **1. Planning the processes of change**

**Taller Costa Rica 2014**

**3 Types of change....**

# PLANNING THE CHANGE?

*Transformative change*



# PLANNING THE CHANGE?

*Emergent change*



Dear Mr. Gandhi,

We regret we cannot fund your proposal because the link between spinning cloth and the fall of the British Empire was not clear to us.

*Written by M. M. Rogers and illustrated by Ariv R. Faizal, Wahyu S., Ary W.S.*

*Creative team for Search for Common Ground in Indonesia*

# PLANNING THE CHANGE?

## *Projectable change*



# What is a simple, **complex**, or complicated procedure?



## COMPLEX

- Cause and effect are only coherent in retrospect and do not repeat
- High degree of innovation, uncertainty, and possible disagreement
- Examples: advocacy (human rights, climate change....)
- Measuring effects focuses on changes in behaviour

## COMPLICATED

- Cause and effect separated in time and space
- There are good practices and successful outcomes
- Example: integrated rural development, natural resource management
- Normally measurable outcomes exist during the project time frame



## CHAOTIC

- No discernible cause and effect
- Requires crisis management
- Examples: Haitian earthquake, Asian Tsunami



## SIMPLE

- Cause and effect... repeatable and predictable
- Follow the recipe...
- Example: immunization
- You can measure results and likely impacts





# **2. Challenges due to project logic**

## **Emblematic cases**

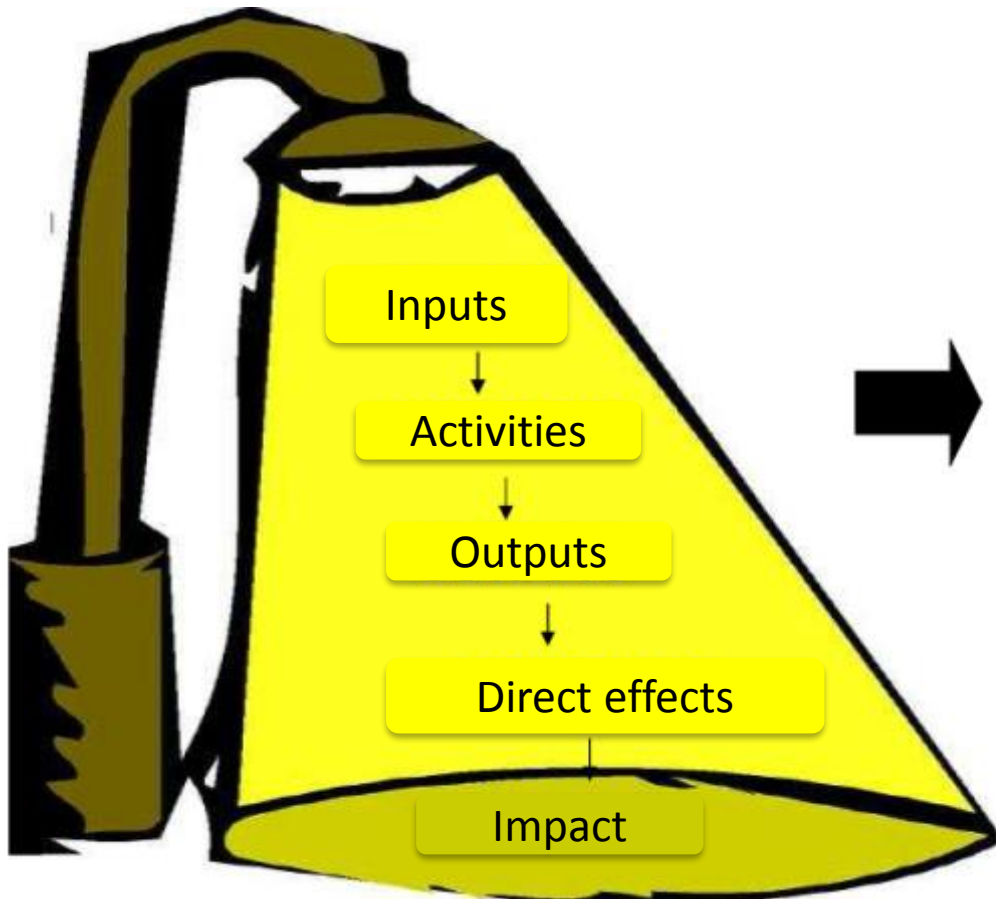
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# Challenges

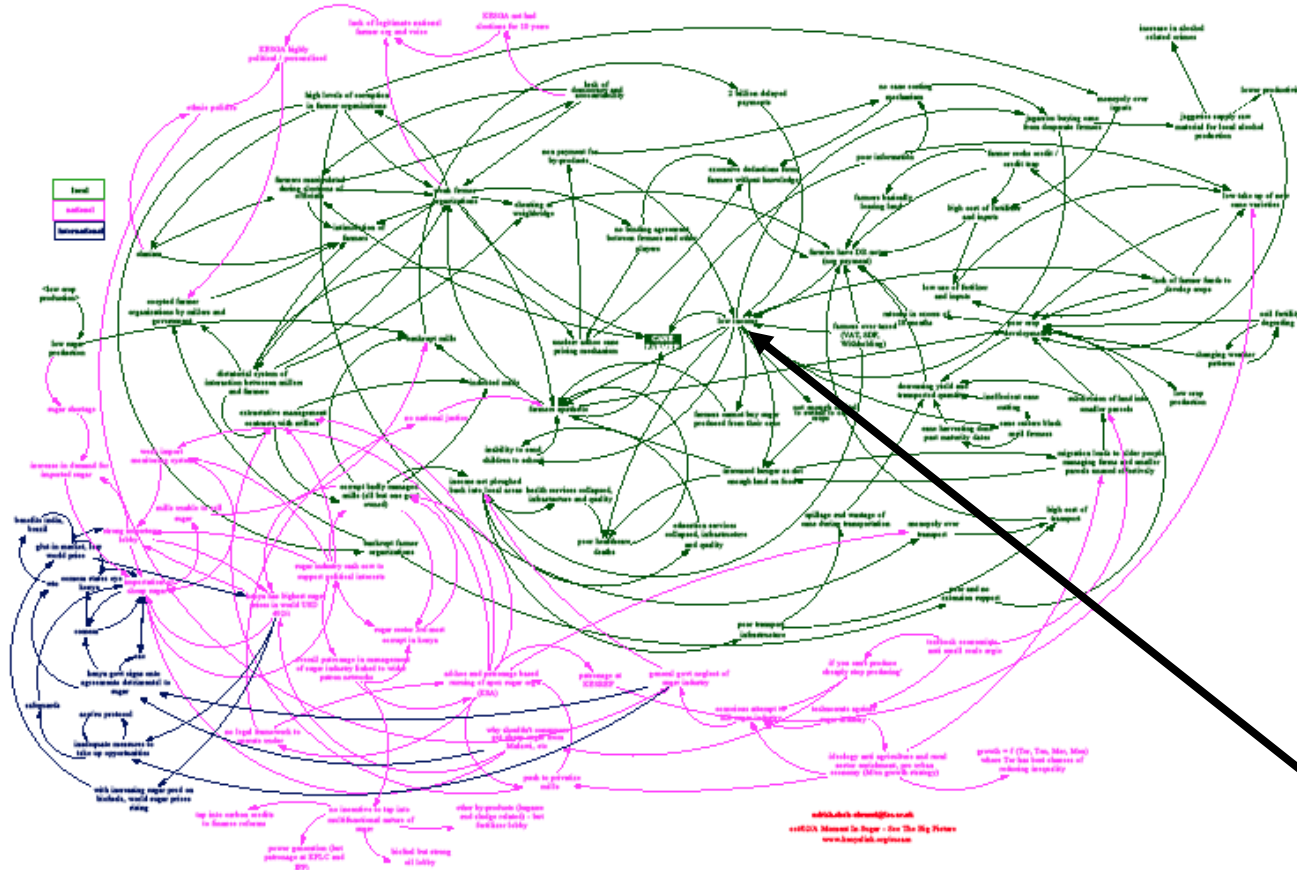
- Submission of proposals
- Time dimensions
- Windows of opportunity
- Risk of getting lost in the measurement of short and medium term effects
- Risk of losing the target groups on the way
- Measuring the impact

# Submission of proposals

# Are **logical frameworks** reflected in reality?



# Working with **social systems**: how to apply **linear logic** for planning?



## The emblematic case

What does change really mean for a sugar cane farmer?

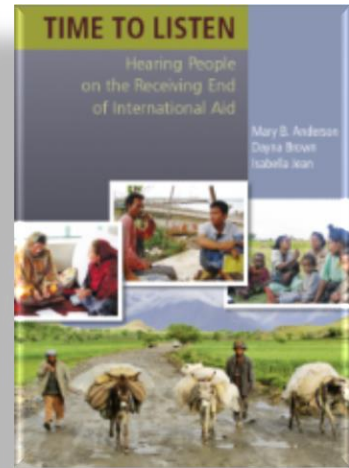
Green - local  
Pink - national  
Blue - international



Cartoon by Julie Smith, World Vision Australia

# The risk of becoming **too technical....**

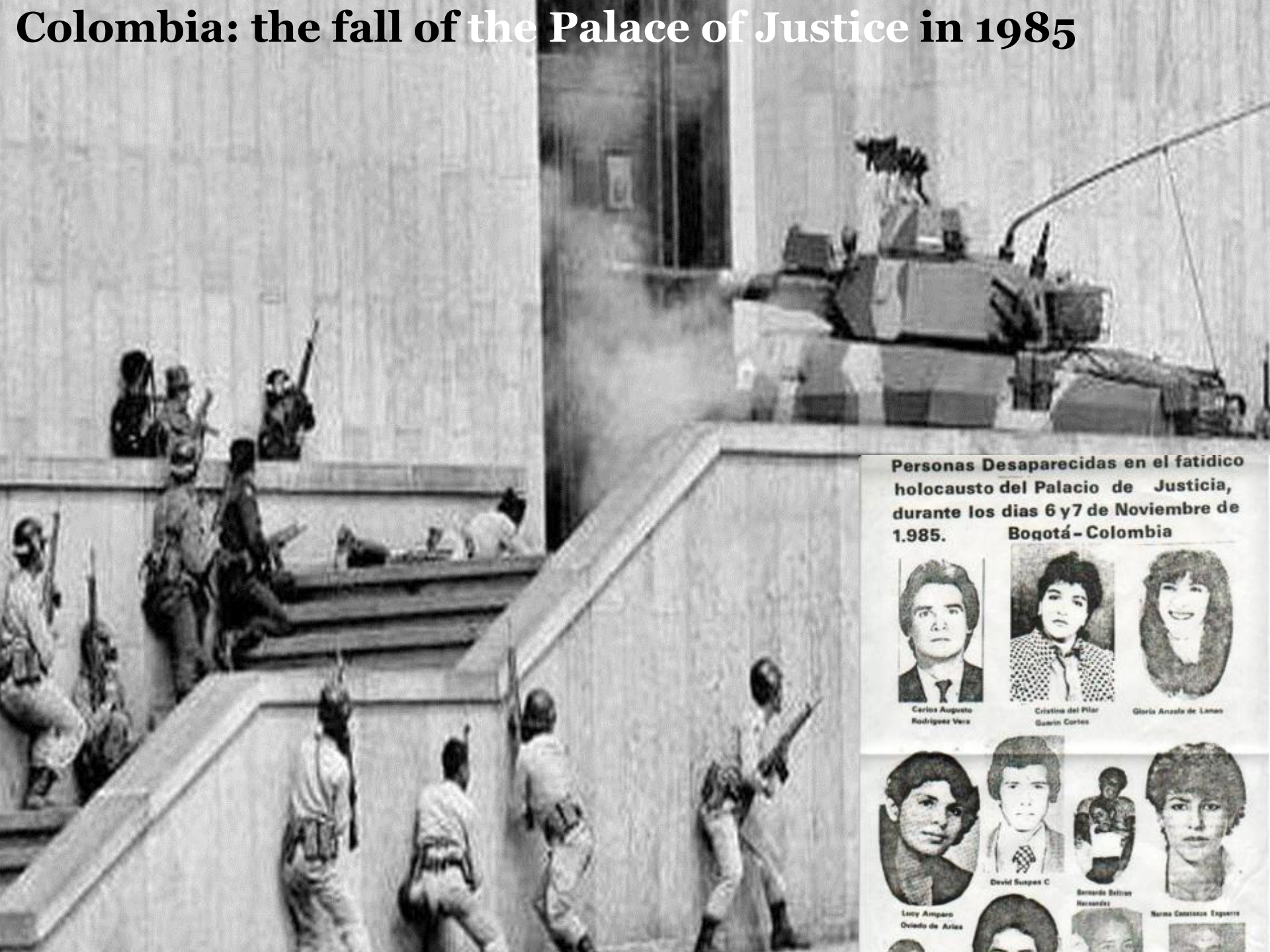
- Rigid processes and check lists, i.e. **“check these boxes”**, are becoming increasingly dominant
- Preparation of **reports** (to meet the requirements of donors to ensure continued funding for a number of projects) becomes an **end in itself**.
- **Cynicism** is gaining ground, “Of course, I will ask my assistant to produce the additional report for you, not a problem...”



# The dimension of time...



# Colombia: the fall of the Palace of Justice in 1985



**Personas Desaparecidas en el fatidico  
holocausto del Palacio de Justicia,  
durante los días 6 y 7 de Noviembre de  
1985. Bogotá - Colombia**



Carlos Augusto  
Rodríguez Vera



Cristina del Pilar  
Gavín Cortés



Gloria Anzola de Lemos



Lucy Amparo  
Oviedo de Ariza



David Susper C



Bernardo Betancur  
Hernández



Norma Constanza Esquerro

# The 'Jose Alvear Restrepo' Lawyers' Collective (CCAJAR) - Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'Jose Alvear Restrepo'



- Search and establishes the truth and seeks justice and full reparations for **violations of human rights and crimes committed** in Colombia, before both national and international tribunals and agencies
- **Conducts and accompanies 50% of cases** before the IACHR and the Corte IDH
- Proceedings take time...
- Example: **almost 30 years after the crime committed** it is expected that the American Court of Human Rights will issue its verdict on the **Palace of Justice case** in the first half of 2014

# Window of opportunities



វិទ្យាស្ថានគំរូមតិ និង គោលនយោបាយ  
ADVOCACY AND POLICY INSTITUTE

# What is required to pass a law?

The **Institute of Policy and Advocacy (API)** of Cambodia in coalition with other actors is actively promoting a **bill on access to information**.

- The **bill** was rejected twice (2007 and 2012)
- Is there a more conducive environment since the **elections** (July 2013)? (the opposition has 55 seats)
- Success can only be achieved through a **partnership** (TAI domestic network)

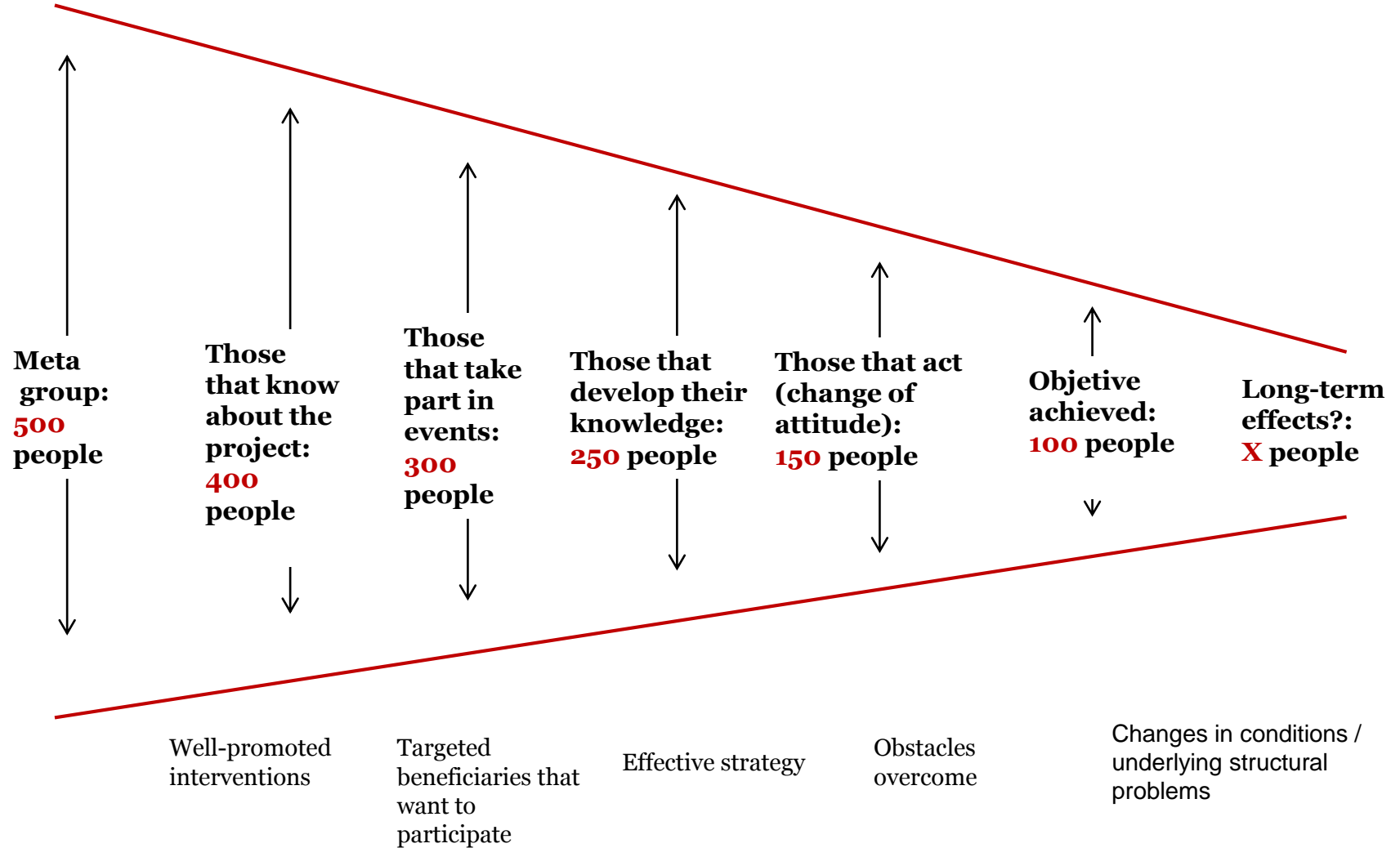
**The risk of getting lost in  
what can be easily  
measured...**

# Indicators that provide information?

	Effects	Indicators
<b>Impact</b>	...Drive change ... to address the structural causes of poverty among women and promote equality and non-discrimination	
<b>Direct effects</b>	Building women's leadership and capacity, and movements to promote ESC rights of women at all levels	<p>25% of trained women leaders gave similar trainings for their constituents using the framework of human rights and...</p> <p>50% of qualified women apply their acquired knowledge and skills in a practical way for their work</p>

**Loosing the  
beneficiaries on  
the way....**

# The “funnel of attrition”



Adapted from



**And the impact?**

# Timeline



<b>COURSE OF THE TEN YEARS OF ACTIVITY</b> <b>COORDINATION OF COLUMBIA-EUROPE-USA (CCEEU) INFLUENCED ON A NATIONAL LEVEL</b>									
Uribe Government 2002 – 2010							Santos Government 2011 - 2014		
2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011	2012	2013
Extension of mandate	External evaluation: finding a new reason for being  109 members in the CCEEU	Expansion the number of CO participants  Establishing speaker offices (vocerías) on a regional level	Establishing an umbrella organisation.  Process for a vote on the National Action Plan for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law	Report on extra-judicial executions	Suspension of the voting process to the National Action Plan for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law  Positioning of the national agenda on extra-judicial executions	Beginning of the guarantee process: National Round Table for safeguards.  Civil society sets priorities on 14 departments	Results of the National Round Table: establishment of a nationwide system of human rights, National Protection Unit, adoption of protection program.  Establishment of a round table on DF		The CCEEU has 245 members.  National plan CCEEU Proposal Guarantee.  CCEEU Inclusion in the National Search Committee

# **3. Collection of data**

## **–risks for activists?**

**Ethical considerations**



## Unfavorable environment: Ethiopia

- An organisation receiving external financial support that exceeds 10% of the NGO budget is classified as an **“International NGO”** and therefore is not allowed to work in certain areas or with a certain approach (such as Human Rights)
- A **control system** over the project by the state (approval, reporting ...)

# Methodological, legal and ethical safeguards to **mitigate data abuse**

- Common example: how should you administrate the **participation lists** for an event?
- What does an **auditor** require?

## 4. Some observations....

- Human rights organizations work in **dynamic environments**, which are **highly contextualized**, with the participation of a multiplicity **of actors** and commitment to different levels of power relations.
- While unpredictable contexts (elections, Arab Spring, drought, economic crisis, market prices...) may also be valid for many organizations with a **“traditional approach”** to development –
- an assumption could be made that it is more difficult to **reach an agreement among actors** that interfere with the project (networks, political influencers...)
- Among the possible **unintended effects** is the danger to human rights activists

- Perhaps the **clearest feature** of the human rights work is its **basis in an international legal framework**
- There is a growing recognition that the **dominant linear PME approaches** (e.g., logical framework) are not always useful for organizations that are supporting **complex and/or complicated processes**.
- Often causal relations can only be established at the level of **"product use"** (direct effects occur beyond the project ...)
- At the level of **IMPACT** the **relationship between cause** (e.g., signing a petition) **and the effect** (e.g., change in law) is quite unpredictable



**Questions, comments?**

# Serenity Prayer

*“God, grant me the serenity to  
accept the things I cannot change,*

*The courage to change the things I  
can,*

*And wisdom to know the  
difference.”*