



Prioritizing the Learning Agenda: the CART Principles

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PRACTITIONERS FORUM
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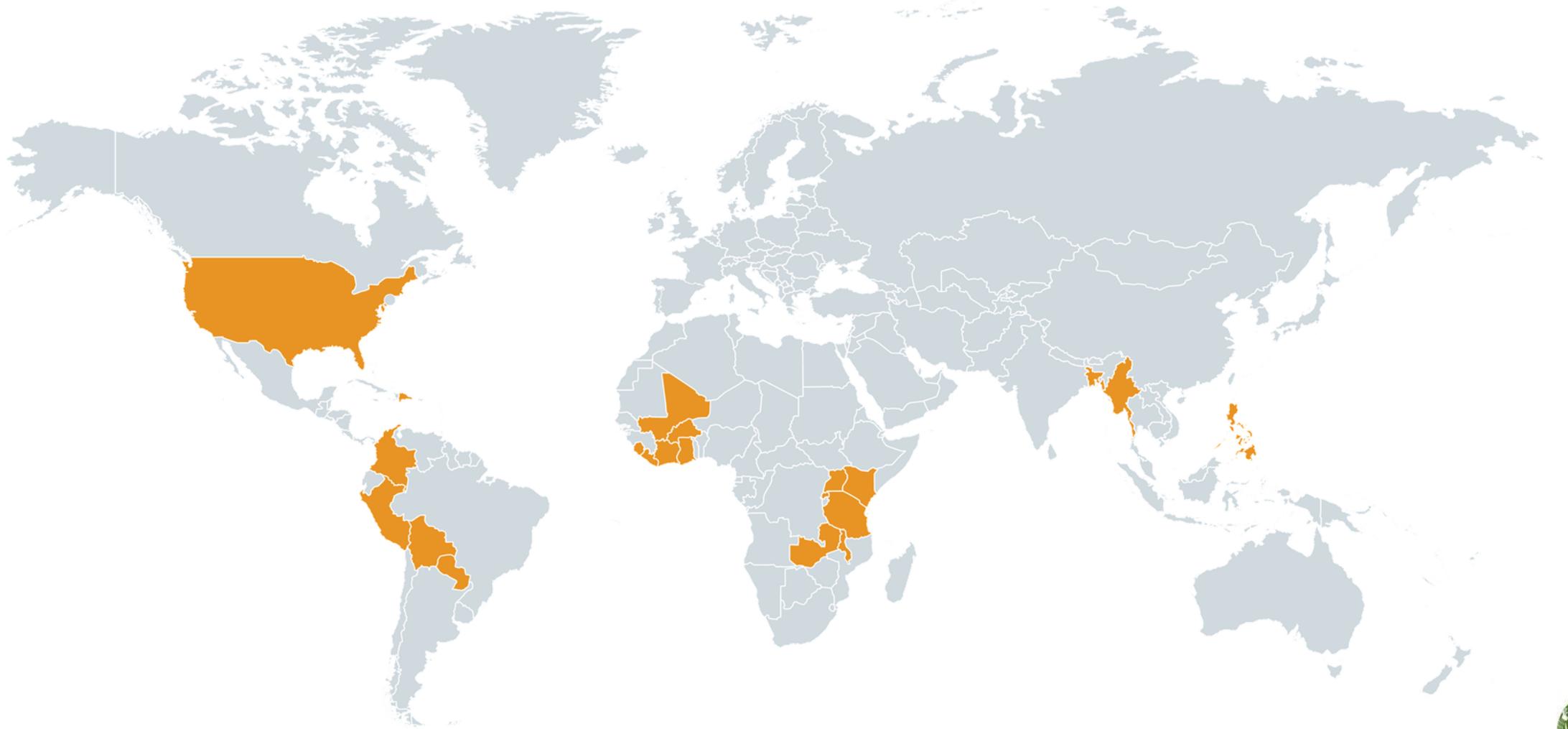
Australian Aid The Asia Foundation COALITIONS for CHANGE



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INNOVATIONS FOR
POVERTY ACTION

About Innovations for Poverty Action

More Evidence, Less Poverty



About Innovations for Poverty Action

Three complementary streams of work

1. Evidence generation

Working with NGOs, government, foundations on scientific impact evaluations, in partnership with academics



2. Sharing Evidence

Engaging practitioners and policy makers for actual use of the evidence



3. Right-Fit Evidence

Supporting organizations with their broader M&E needs and learning strategies



Why not just do an impact evaluation?

Ten Reasons Not to Measure Impact— and What to Do Instead

Impact evaluations are an important tool for learning about effective solutions to social problems, but they are a good investment only in the right circumstances. In the meantime, organizations must build an internal culture in which the right data are regularly collected, analyzed, and applied to manage implementation and improve programs.

1. *Not the Right Tool: Excellent question, wrong approach.*

2. *Not Now: The program design is not ready.*

3. *Not Now: The program implementation is not ready.*

4. *Not Now: It is too late.*

5. *Not Feasible: Resources are too limited.*

6. *Not Feasible: Indirect effects are difficult to identify, yet critical to the theory of change.*

7. *Not Feasible: Program setting is too chaotic.*

8. *Not Feasible: Implementation happens at too high a level.*

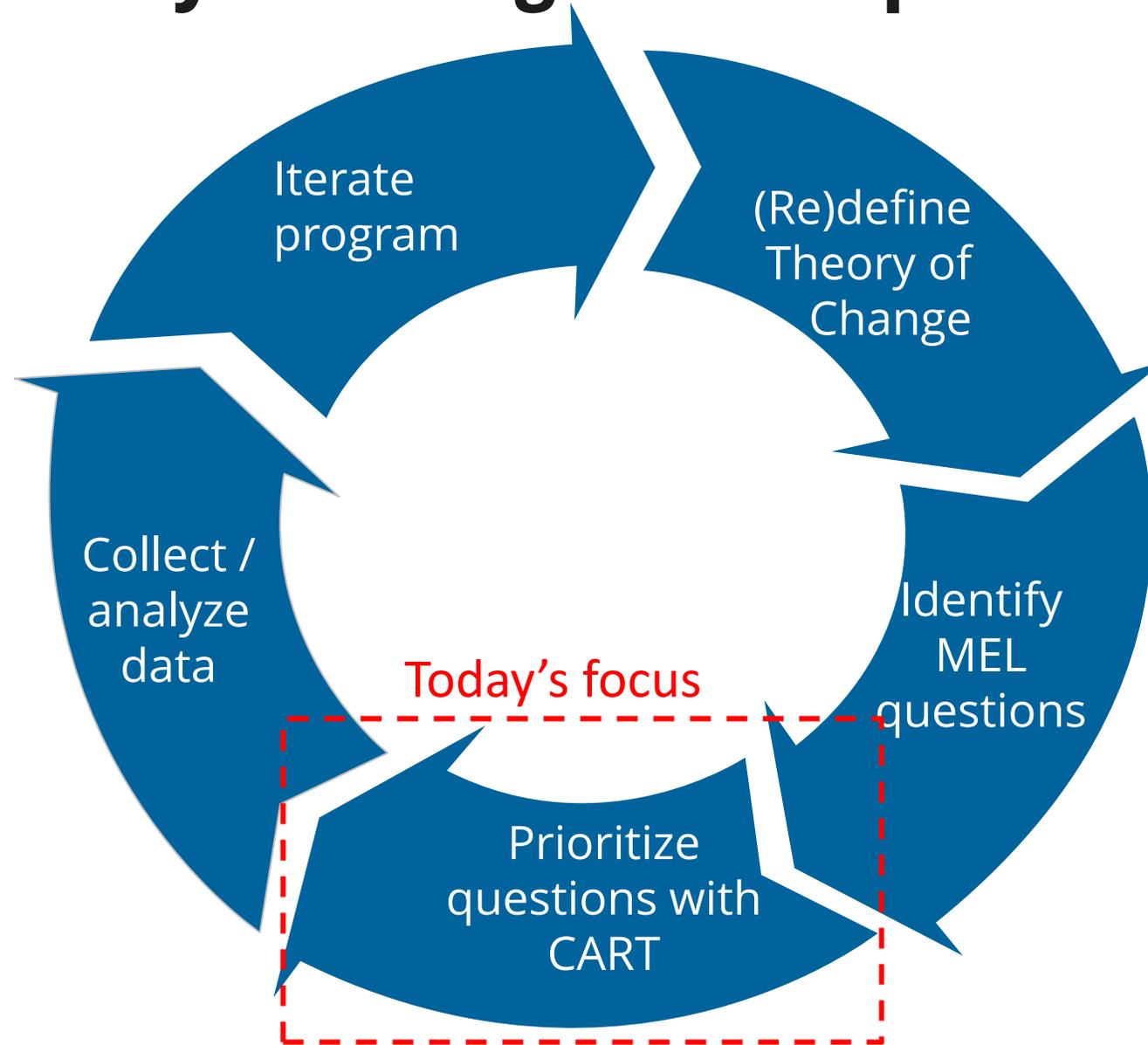
9. *Not Worth It: We already know the answer.*

10. *Not Worth It: No generalized knowledge gain.*

Dynamic settings, adaptive programs



Using the Theory of Change for adaptive management



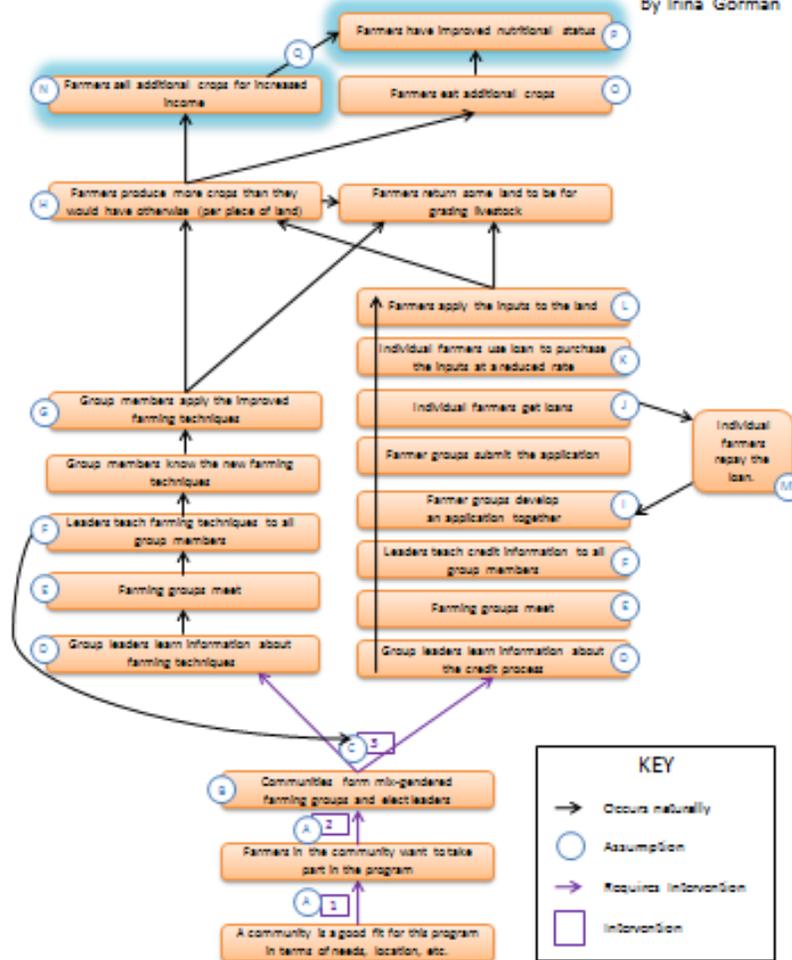
The core challenge



Can/should we really track all of this?

ZIMBABWE PROGRAM THEORY

By Trina Gorman



ASSUMPTIONS

- A. TCO/ Extension agent has buy-in and approval from local leaders for program and meeting. AND. Meeting is at a time that farmers can attend. AND. Farmers know about the meeting, want to attend, and do.
- B. TCO/ Extension agent gains buy in from farmers from both genders. AND. Both genders are willing to be in a group together. AND. other cultural dynamics do not impeded group formation.
- C. Extension agent and group leaders have the resources needed, and the desire to attend the meetings.
- D. Extension agent teaches the information in an effective way. Leaders are able to retain the information.
- E. Meeting is at a time that farmers can attend. AND. Farmers know about the meeting, want to attend, and do. AND. Over time, farmers find meetings valuable enough to continue coming.
- F. Information is of high quality and locally relevant. AND. Leaders remember the information and think it is valuable enough to share. AND. Leaders are able to relay the information in a consistent, correct way.
- G. Farmers believe information is correct and worth the investment. AND. Farmers have the resources and physical ability to apply the information.
- H. New techniques /inputs are locally relevant and achieve expected improved return.
- I. Group members want a loan (are not too risk averse). AND. Group members have the literacy skills needed to complete the loan.
- J. APC has sufficient capital to provide the loan. AND. Poor farmers agree to share collateral. AND. Collateral from all farmers is sufficient. AND. APC accepts the application.
- K. Farmers desire to use the loan for the suggested inputs. AND. Group members collaborate on when to purchase inputs. AND. Farmers have access to a market that contains the inputs. AND. Prices are lower because of bulk buying.
- L. The additional inputs actually work as intended to increase productivity.
- M. Farmers have the money to repay the loan. AND. Farmers uphold their word out of honesty. OR. Farmers hold each other accountable for repayment.
- N. Farmers have access to a market to sell inputs and there is sufficient demand to make sale.
- O. Additional crops are distributed amongst both genders. AND. Nothing happens to the crops to impede them from being eaten. AND. Crops are palatable to farmers.
- P. Disease (or other factors) do not impede improved nutrition.
- Q. Farmer's use extra income to purchase food.

Note: for the sake of simplicity, did not call out each specific assumption regarding women except for in A above. There are many more areas where the model could break down based on gender issues, but I thought it unnecessary to repeat each. Perhaps this note can serve as a general assumption that women are treated as equally as men in each item above. (quite a loaded assumption for sure)

ACTIVITIES

1. TCO and extension agent hold a meeting with all farmers to educate them about program and gain support.
2. Extension agent holds meetings to train the group leaders about general program.
3. Extension agent holds meetings with group leaders to educate them about credit and agriculture techniques. (reoccurring)



Our Tool: Prioritize MEL questions with CART



Credible

Collect high quality data and analyze the data accurately



Responsible

Ensure the benefits of data collection outweigh the costs



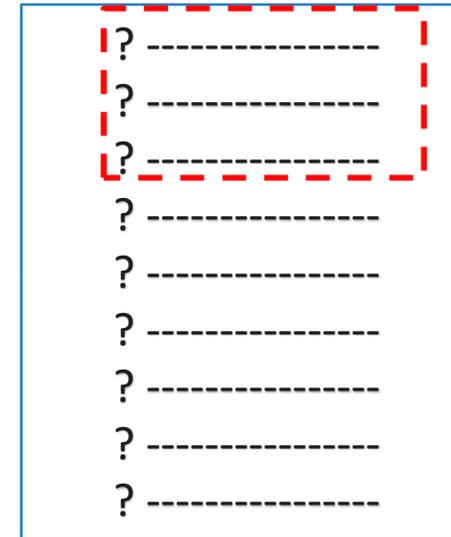
Actionable

Commit to act on the data you collect



Transportable

Collect data that generate knowledge for other programs



Prioritized learning questions



Credible

Data = valid, reliable, unbiased

Analysis = appropriate



Credible data

Credit: mooselakecartoons.com

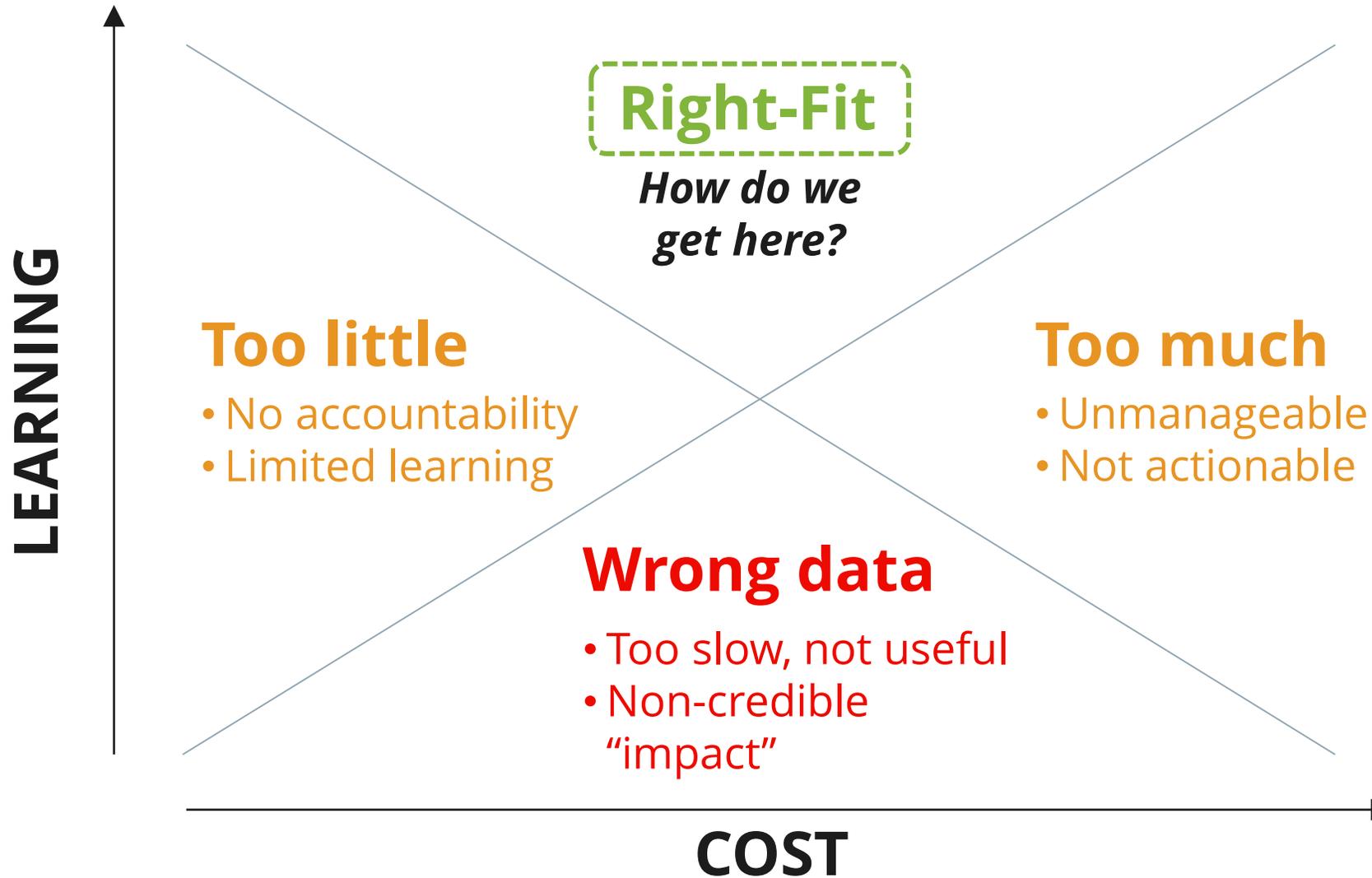


Actionable

- If there is no plan for how to use the data, do not collect them
 - Specific action/change possible for each piece of data
 - Setting up the right systems to handle this information



Responsible



Transportable

- What's your Theory of Change? Who else has a similar theory?
- Does it replicate?



CECIL COULD NOT FATHOM WHY THEY DECIDED **THEIR** DIETARY HABITS BY WATCHING **HIM** EATING DRY PELLETS.

Credit: © Hilda Bastian



Questions? btan@poverty-action.org

