Performance Monitoring's Three Blind Spots

Ricardo Wilson-Grau
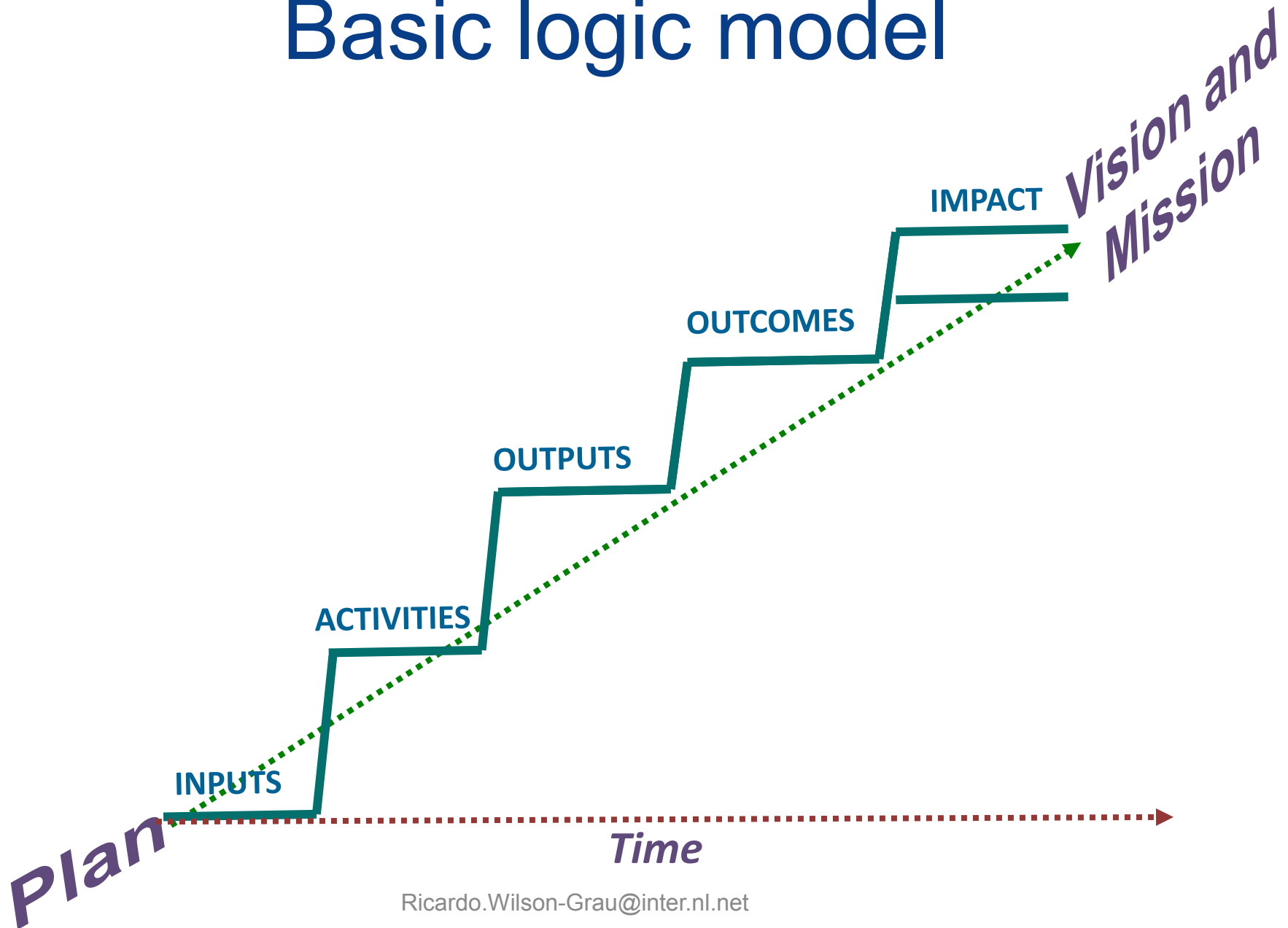
USAID Complexity-Aware Monitoring Discovery Launch

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Fish Soup Development Story

**Inspired by Monika Jetzin, Global Water Partnership, Hungary**

A few years ago in Eastern Europe I was giving a workshop for the Global Water Partnership. The participants' common language was Russian, which I do not speak. Thus, I presented in English (as I am doing today) and we had simultaneous translation. At lunch, Monika Jetzin who speaks both English and Russian, said, "Ricardo, we have a big problem. Your explanations of the differences between the different types of results is lost because outputs, outcomes and impact are all translated by the same word in Russian for 'results'". Therefore, we cooked up this fish soup development story.

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Basic logic model

INPUTS

ACTIVITIES

OUTPUTS
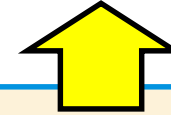
OUTCOMES

IMPACT
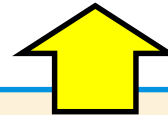
Vision and Mission

Plan

Time

Basic logic model

In Russian, there is one translation for the words output, outcome, and impact…so we had to differentiate by using examples, and the Fish Soup story was born!
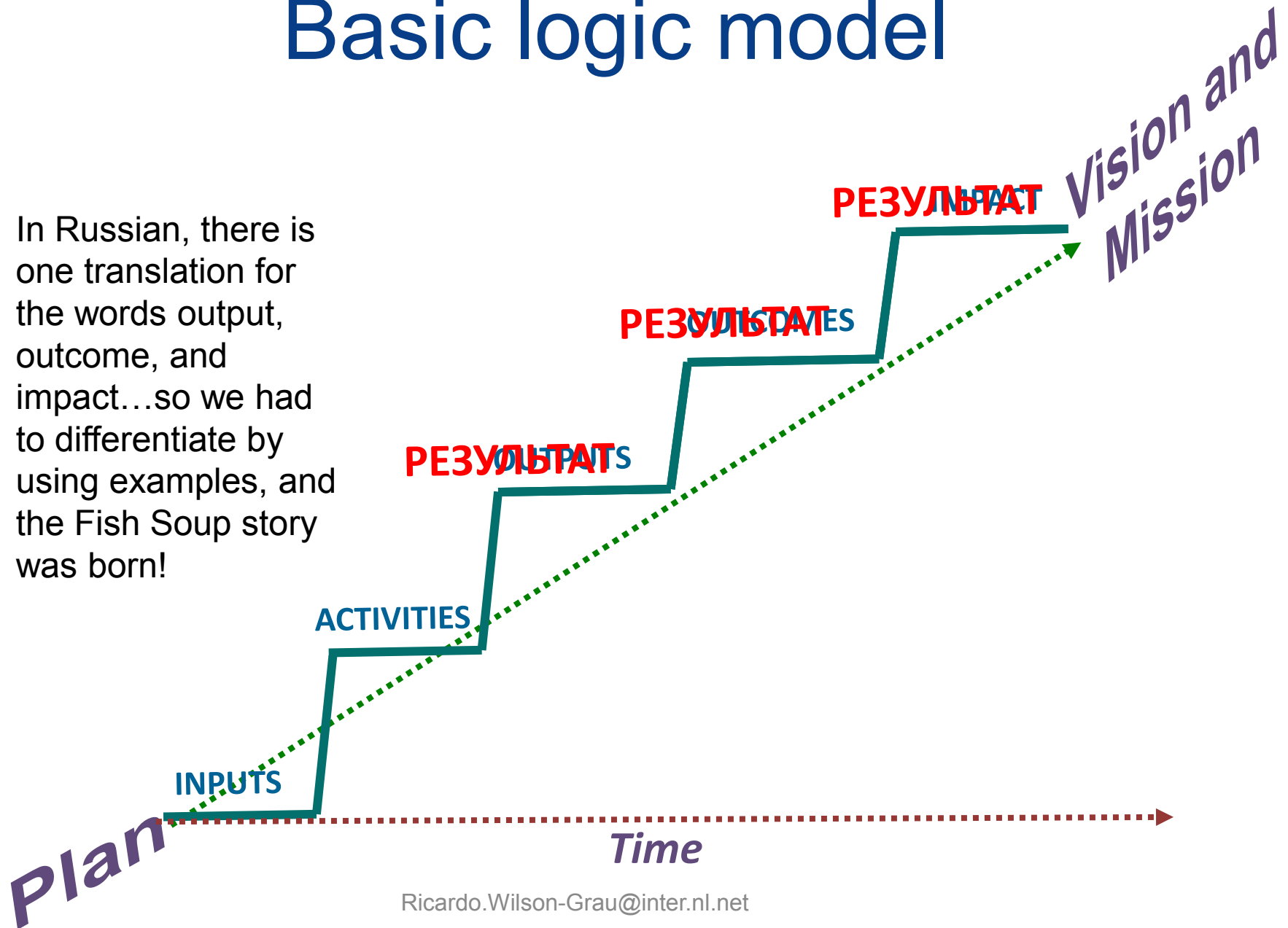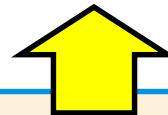
Vision and Mission

РЕЗУЛЬТАТ

РЕЗУЛЬТАТ

РЕЗУЛЬТАТ

ACTIVITIES

INPUTS

Plan
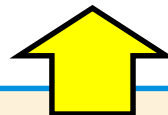
Time

Impact

Children are healthy adults

Outcome

Children consider the soup delicious and begin demanding fish soup weekly

Output

Children taste the most nourishing fish soup in the world

Activities

Mother or father carefully prepare and cook all the ingredients

Inputs or resources

Parents get together fish, fresh vegetables, water, barley, spices, pot, source of heat

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First blind spot: Unintended results

…But the real world is more dynamic

Impact

Children are healthy adults

↑

Outcome

Children consider the soup delicious and begin demanding fish soup weekly

↑

Output

Children taste the most nourishing fish soup in the world

↑

Activities

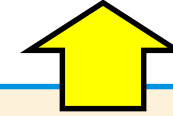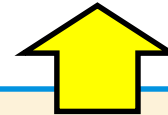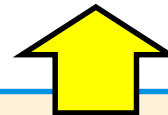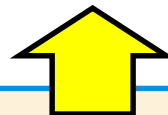**Mother or father carefully prepare and cook all the ingredients**

↑

Inputs or resources

Parents get together fish, fresh vegetables, water, barley, spices, pot, source of heat

First blind spot: Unintended results

Impact

Children are healthy adults

Outcome

Hog farmer goes out of business

Outcome

Local library features great grandmother's fish soup
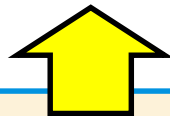
Outcome

Other parents begin to use the fish soup recipe

Outcome

Children invite friends for fish soup dinner

Outcome

Children learn how to cook great grandmother's fish soup

Outcome

Children consider the soup delicious and begin demanding fish soup weekly

Output

Children taste the most nourishing fish soup in the world
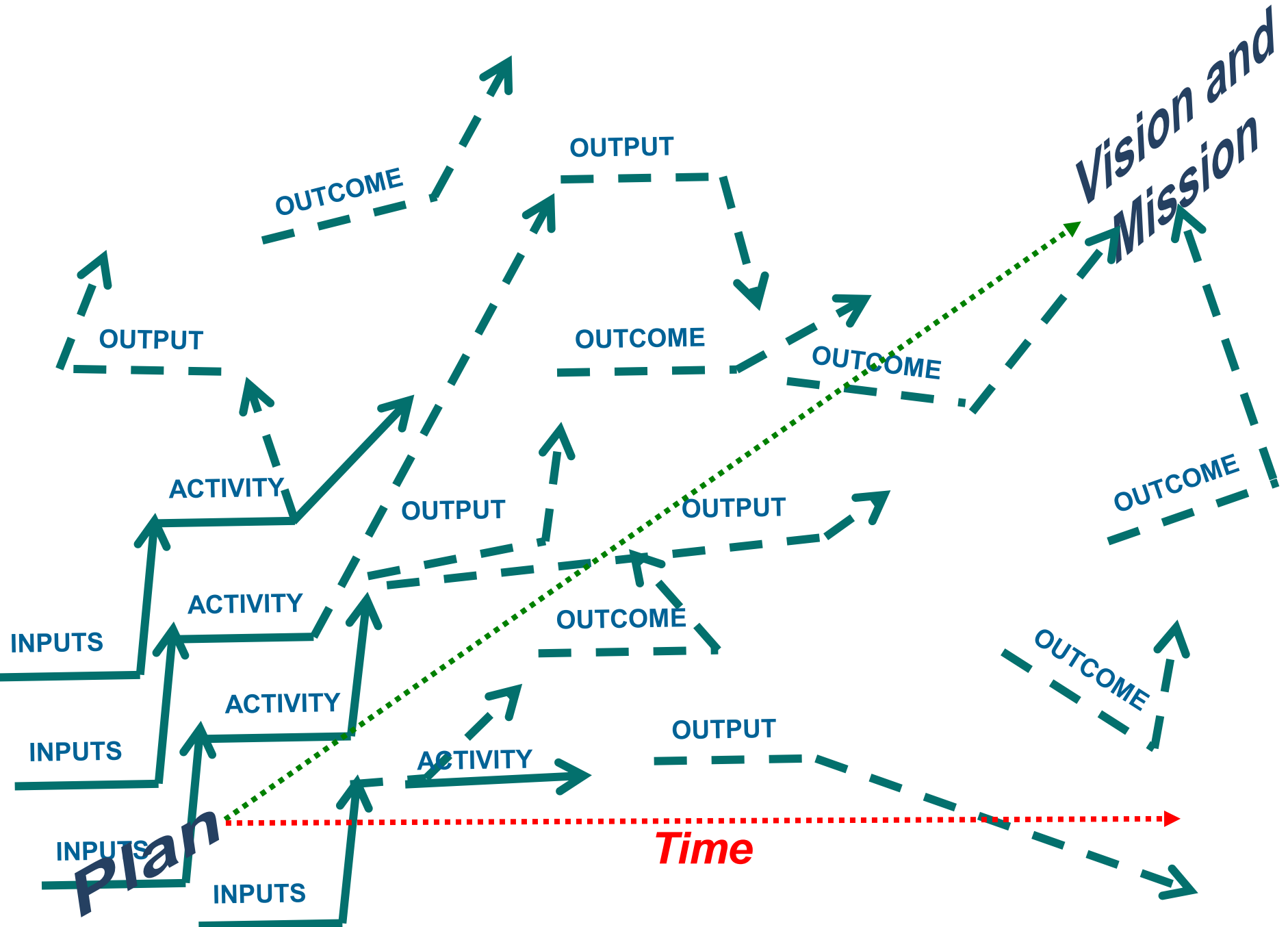
Basic Logic Model

…But when the real world is more complex, we face high uncertainty about achieving the intended results as modeled here.

Vision and Mission

IMPACT

OUTCOMES

OUTPUTS

ACTIVITIES

INPUTS

Plan

Time

OUTCOME

OUTPUT

Vision and Mission

OUTPUT

OUTCOME

OUTCOME

OUTCOME

ACTIVITY

OUTPUT

OUTPUT

OUTCOME

ACTIVITY

INPUTS

OUTCOME

ACTIVITY

OUTCOME

OUTPUT

INPUTS

ACTIVITY

INPUTS

Plan

Time

INPUTS
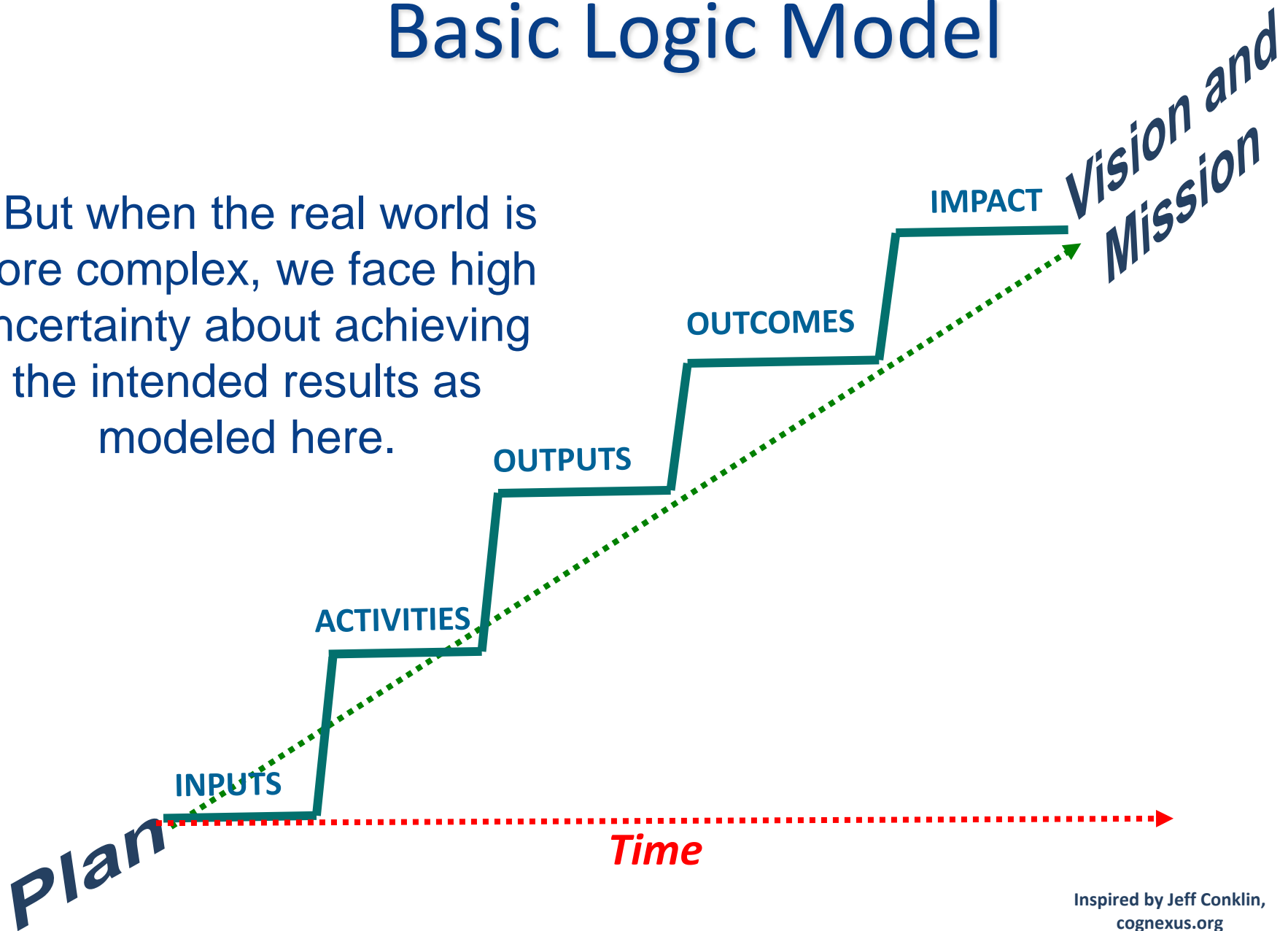
2nd and 3rd blind spots

Alternative causes

Multiple pathways

Output

1, 2, 3, 4 friends find the soup delicious

Output

Teacher preaches "fish is only flesh fit for human consumption"

Output

TV documentary on fish as antidote to obesity

Outcome

Children consider the soup delicious and begin demanding fish soup weekly

Output

Children taste the most nourishing fish soup in the world

In summary

"The recent meta-evaluation of 340 USAID evaluation reports found that only 15% reported on unplanned effects, and only 10% discussed causes in addition to USAID interventions that might be contributing to results."

Complexity-aware monitoring can be a solution.