USAID
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PROGRAMNET

Operationalizing Adaptive Management

What it takes. Why it matters.

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May 19, 2015

MercyCorps

Saving and improving lives in the world's toughest places.

MERCY CORPS

- 45 countries
- Complex contexts
- A catalyst for change

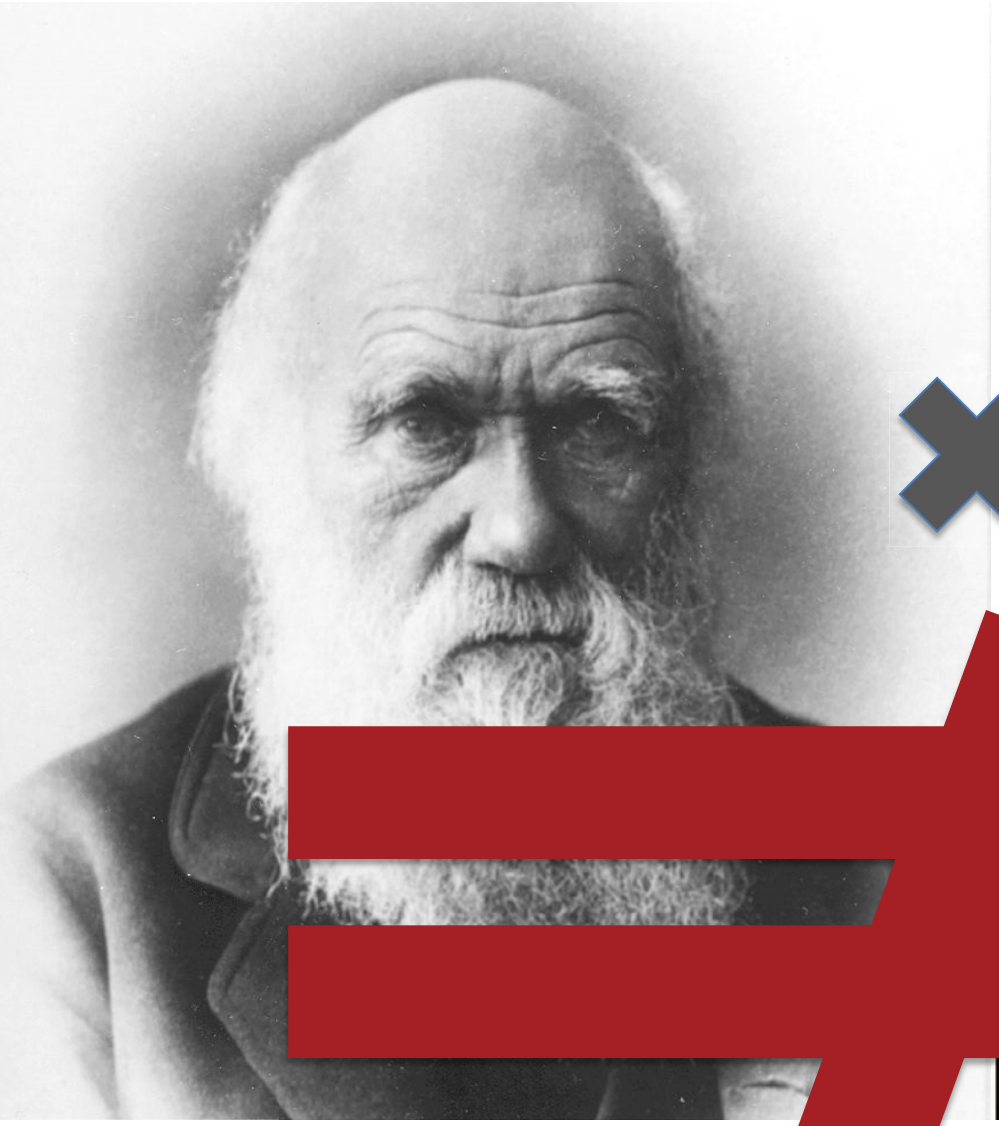
> Working in **partnership**, we bring **big ideas** and **bold action** together **with local insights, building stability and strength from within**

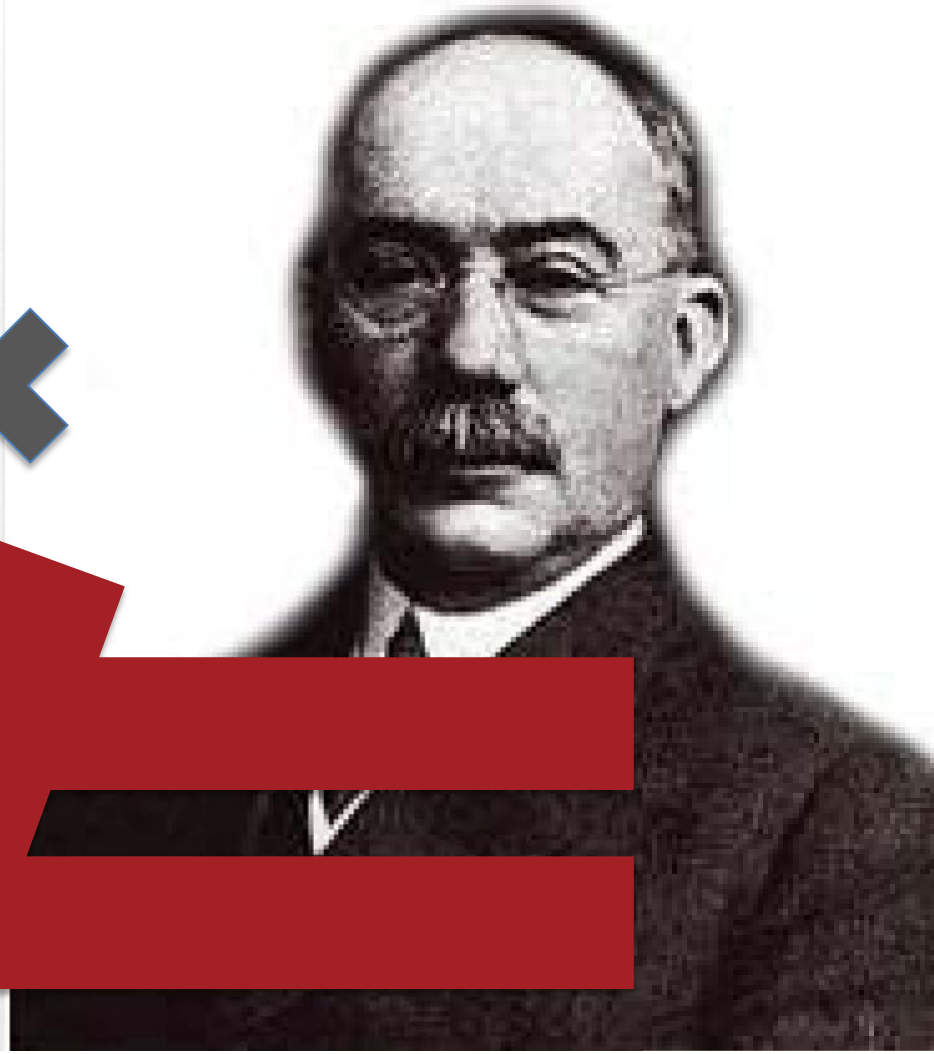
Saving and improving lives in the world's toughest places.

The world is changing…

Flexibility constrained

What is adaptive management?





Darwin

Gantt

Poll: so, what is adaptive management?

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PHRASES BEST DESCRIBE ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT?

A. Taking 'small bets' that allow us to build on success and learn from failures

B. Using excellent monitoring processes as feedback loops for program decisions

C. Changing strategies, plans, and activities to meet an overall goal, in response to new information

D. All of the above

“A structured, iterative process of robust decision making in the face of uncertainty, with an aim to reducing uncertainty over time via system monitoring.”

Poll: Are you managing adaptively?

ARE YOU CURRENTLY USING ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Don't know

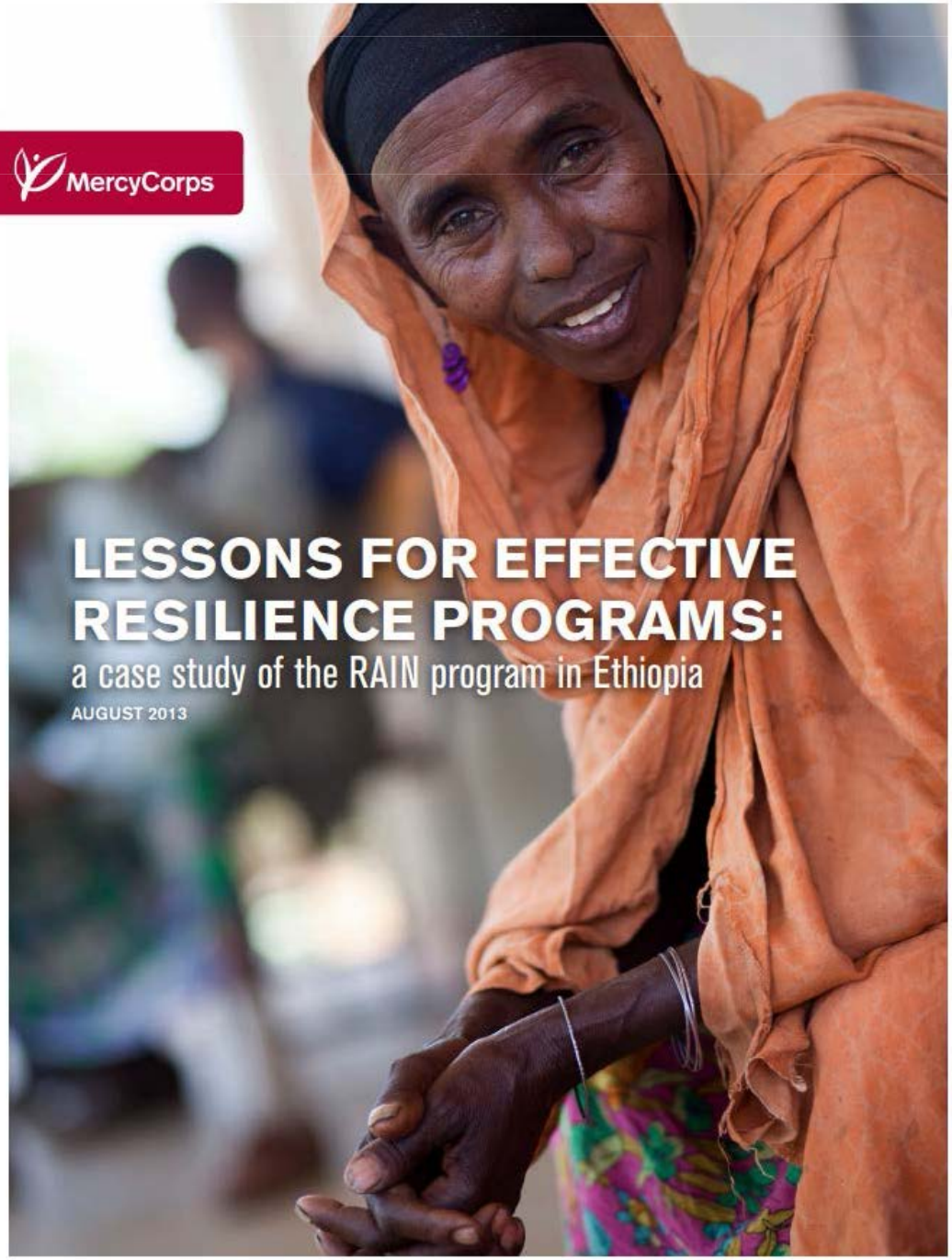
Adaptive management at Mercy Corps

Culture

People & Skills

Tools & Systems

Tools & Systems


MercyCorps
LESSONS FOR EFFECTIVE RESILIENCE PROGRAMS:
a case study of the RAIN program in Ethiopia
AUGUST 2013

Enabling environment

Poll: Adaptive management in practice

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR AN ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT RESPONSE?

A. USAID/OFDA funded emergency programs

B. USAID funded market systems development programs

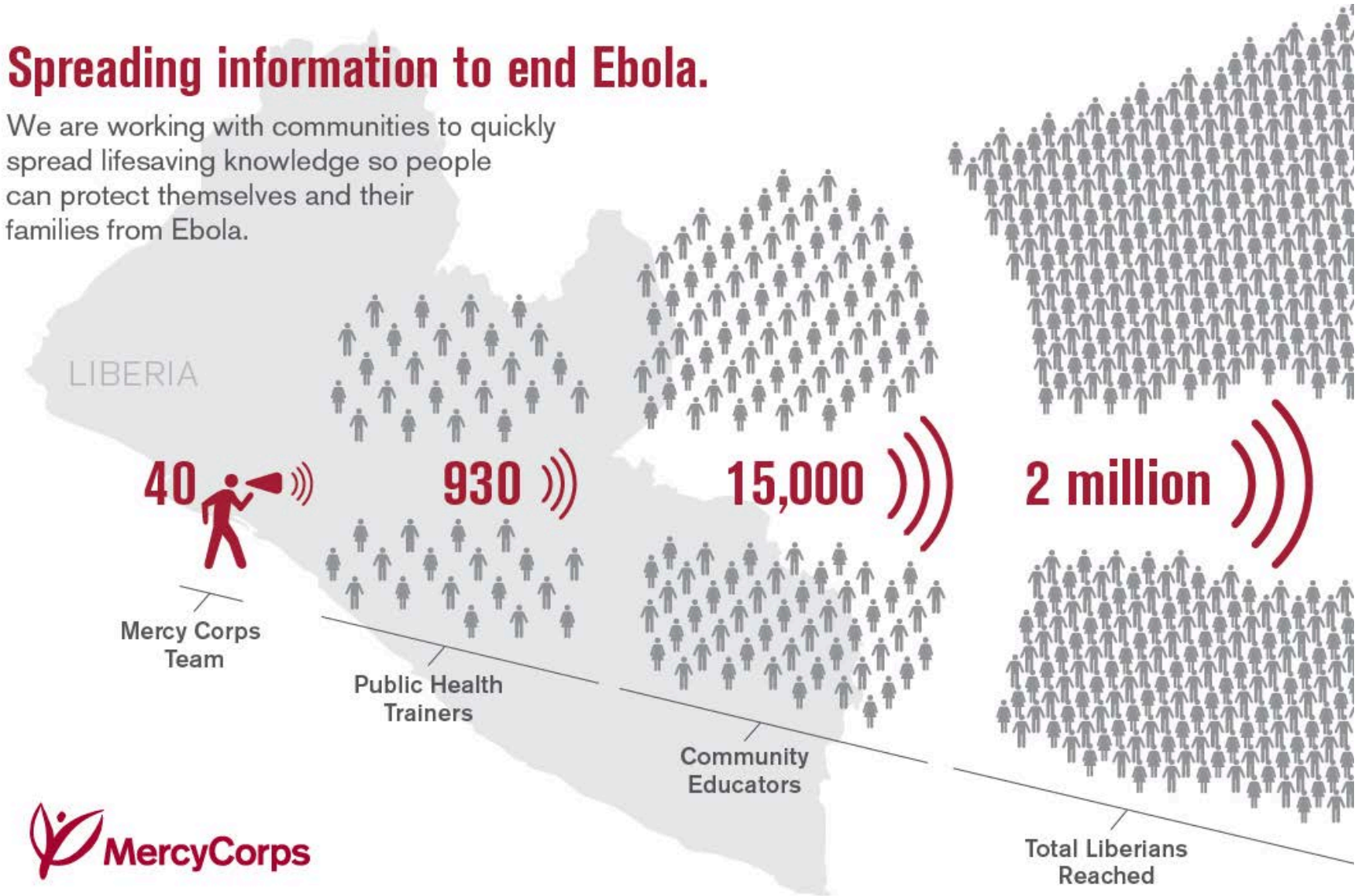
C. USAID/Food for Peace funded food security programs

D. USAID/PEPFAR funded HIV programs

E. None of the above

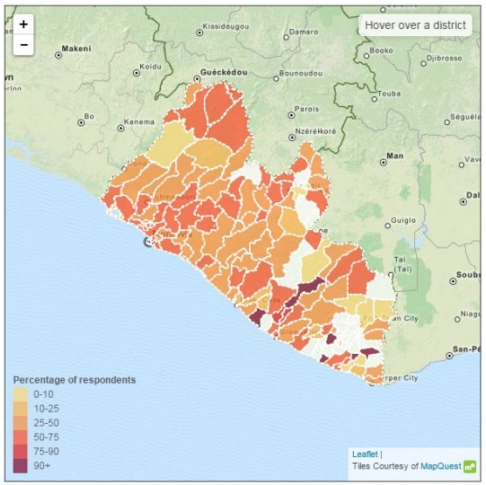
F. All of the above

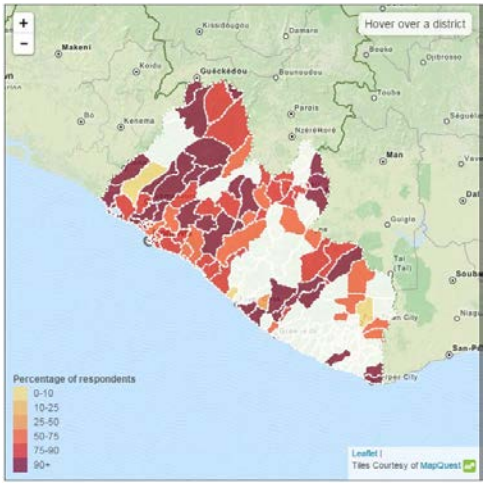
Introducing E-CAP

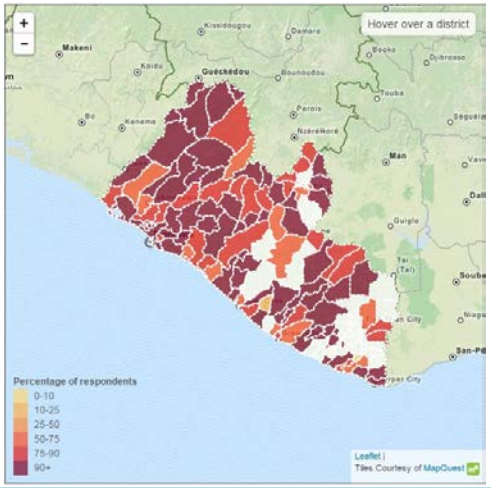


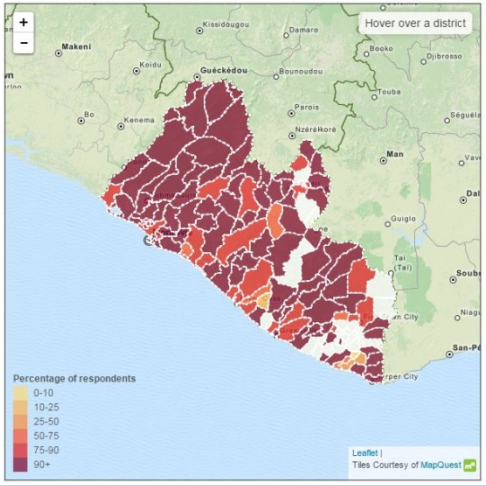
Enabling environment in E-CAP

Tools & Systems in E-CAP









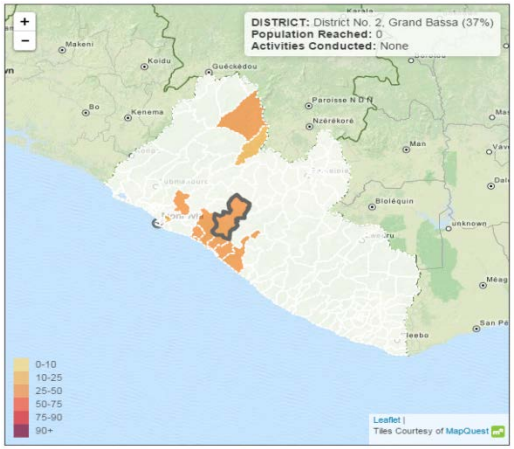
January

Download Csv

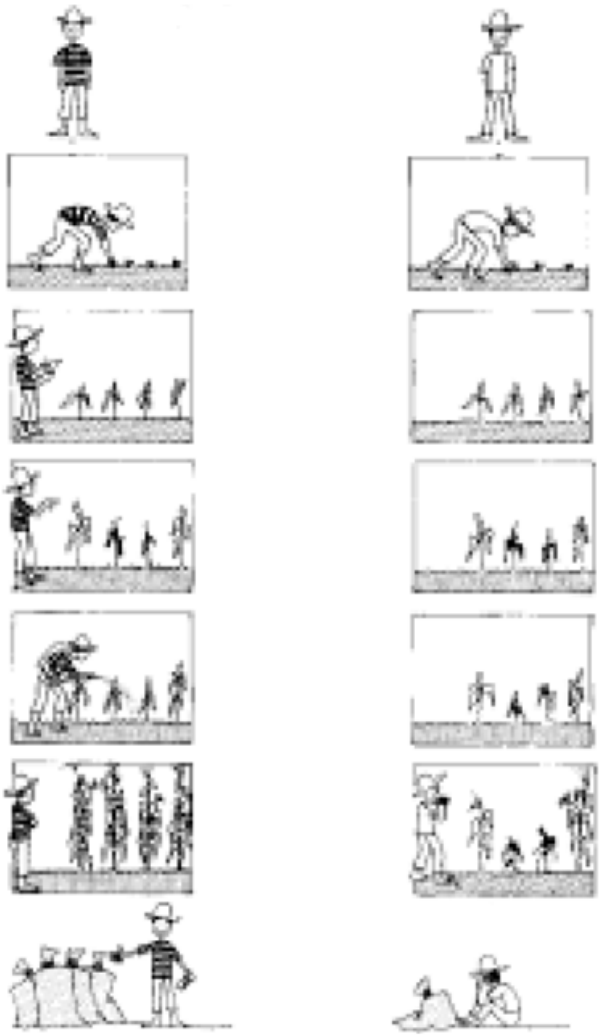
vomiting, and running stomach, they would not touch them

- % of people who state that if somebody in their family was sick with fever, running stomach and headache, they would call for somebody to take them to an ETU
- % people who believe that when somebody goes to an ETU they will get food
- % people who believe that when somebody goes to an ETU they will get medicine
- % people who believe that if you call for a burial team to pick up a dead body, you will have to pay money
- % people who believe that when somebody goes to an ETU, their family can vist them
- % people who would feel totally or a little comfortable feel touching, hugging or kissing a family member or friend who is an Ebola survivor
- **% people who would feel totally or a little comfortable visiting the house of an Ebola survivor**
- % of people who state they will only believe that somebody who had Ebola is cured If they have a paper from the ETU

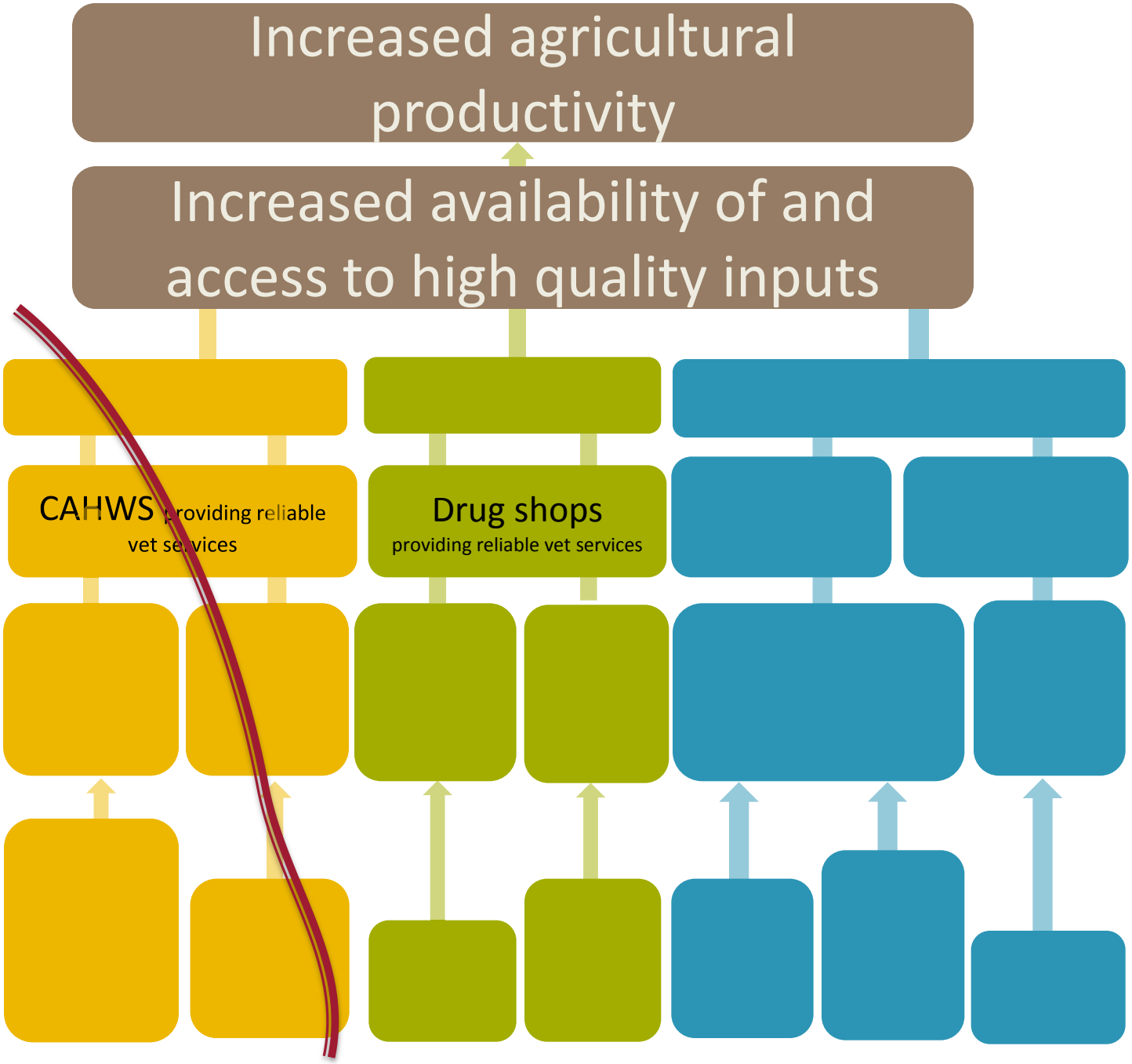
Culture in E-CAP



People & Skills in E-CAP



engineers without borders
ingénieurs sans frontières
Canada
MercyCorps
NAVIGATING
COMPLEXITY

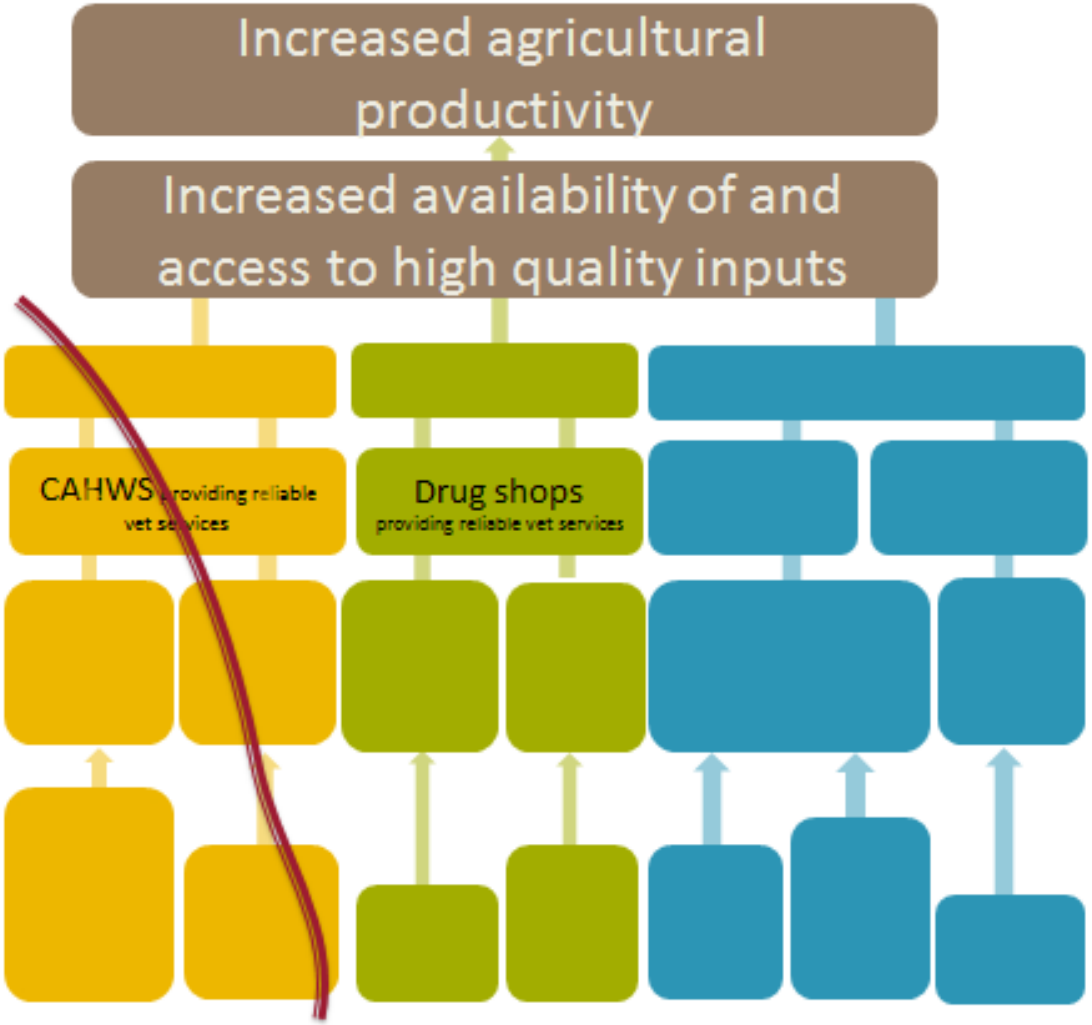

Increased agricultural productivity
Increased availability of and access to high quality inputs
CAHWS providing reliable vet services
Drug shops
providing reliable vet services

Culture

People & Skills

Tools & Systems

Enabling environment



Lessons for replication

Culture	Promote a spirit of outcome-orientation & failure-friendly culture between donor and implementer
People & Skills	Hires for key positions should not always be based on years of experience, but on soft coaching and change management skills
Tools & Systems	Allocate sufficient budgets for learning. 'Innovation & investment funds' are exceptionally effective in development programs
Enabling environment	Orient M&E to outcomes, allowing flexibility at the activity level. Ensure the scope for adaptive management is clear and supported throughout

** Remember: You can't just do one – these are mutually reinforcing

Additional References

Mercy Corps References

1. Mercy Corps (2015) Managing Complexity: Adaptive management at Mercy Corps.
2. Amir Allana and Tim Sparkman (2014). Navigating Complexity, case study in *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* (2014)
3. Shanti Kleiman (2013). The RAIN Learning Study, Lessons for Effective Resilience Programmes.

External References

1. Christopher Maclay (2014). Management not models…
2. Duncan Green (2014). Fit for the future? Systems thinking and the role of International NGOs
3. Engineers Without Borders (2014). Shifting Aid Models to manage for systemic change
4. World Bank Group (2015). World Development Report 2015 : Mind, Society, and Behavior -- particularly chapter 11

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