

What is the Problem?

Measuring Outcomes in the Advice Sector

The Advice Sector Perspective

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Three issues from the practice perspective

- Evidence base practitioners are best placed to generate
- The drivers of evaluation and its impact on advice practice
- Role of 'outcomes' in access to justice



**advice
services
alliance**

What works in advice services?

- How do we access clients: trusted sources or professional services?
- What works best and for whom: telephone or face to face?
- What happens to people who do not get advice?
- What is the impact of the 'hostile environment'?
- Does advice improve people's wider circumstances?
- Does advice enhance client's 'locus of control'?
- What is the relationship between advice and social justice?
- How does funders objective influence and shape advice provision?
- How can we prevent advice by improving decision making

We don't know....



Key Issue: What is the Role for Practitioners?

- A lot of time and energy spent collecting data
- Variation in research skills and practice
- Analytical power is very weak
- Opportunities to scale up missed
- Reporting is aimed at funding audience
- Process evaluation more than outcomes research

What is the benefit of this effort for the client?

Drivers of outcomes measurement

- Funder's own outcome goals
- Commissioning practices which buys a 'product'
- Openness and accountability for public spending
- Government hostility/suspicion of voluntary sector
- Service redesign and shift in access
- Generates knowledge to support funding
- Practitioner curiosity

Problems with advice outcomes

- What outcomes to measure, what is positive?
- How to measure, valid and reliable tools
- When to measure to capture outcomes
- Attribution of outcome to advice
- Resources and skills required by services
- Perverse consequences of counting things

Rights to
decent
housing

Long tradition of helping

Setting up
the welfare
state

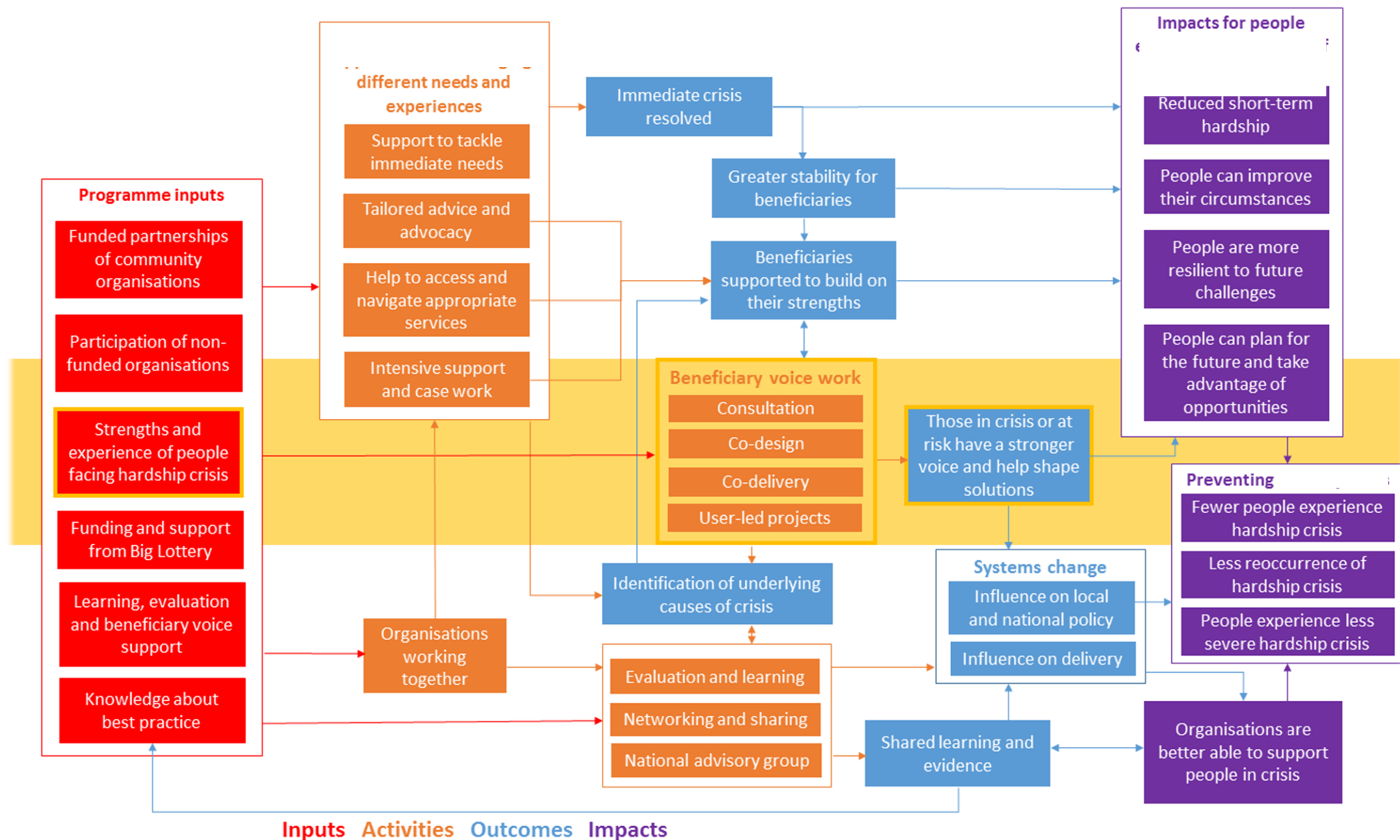


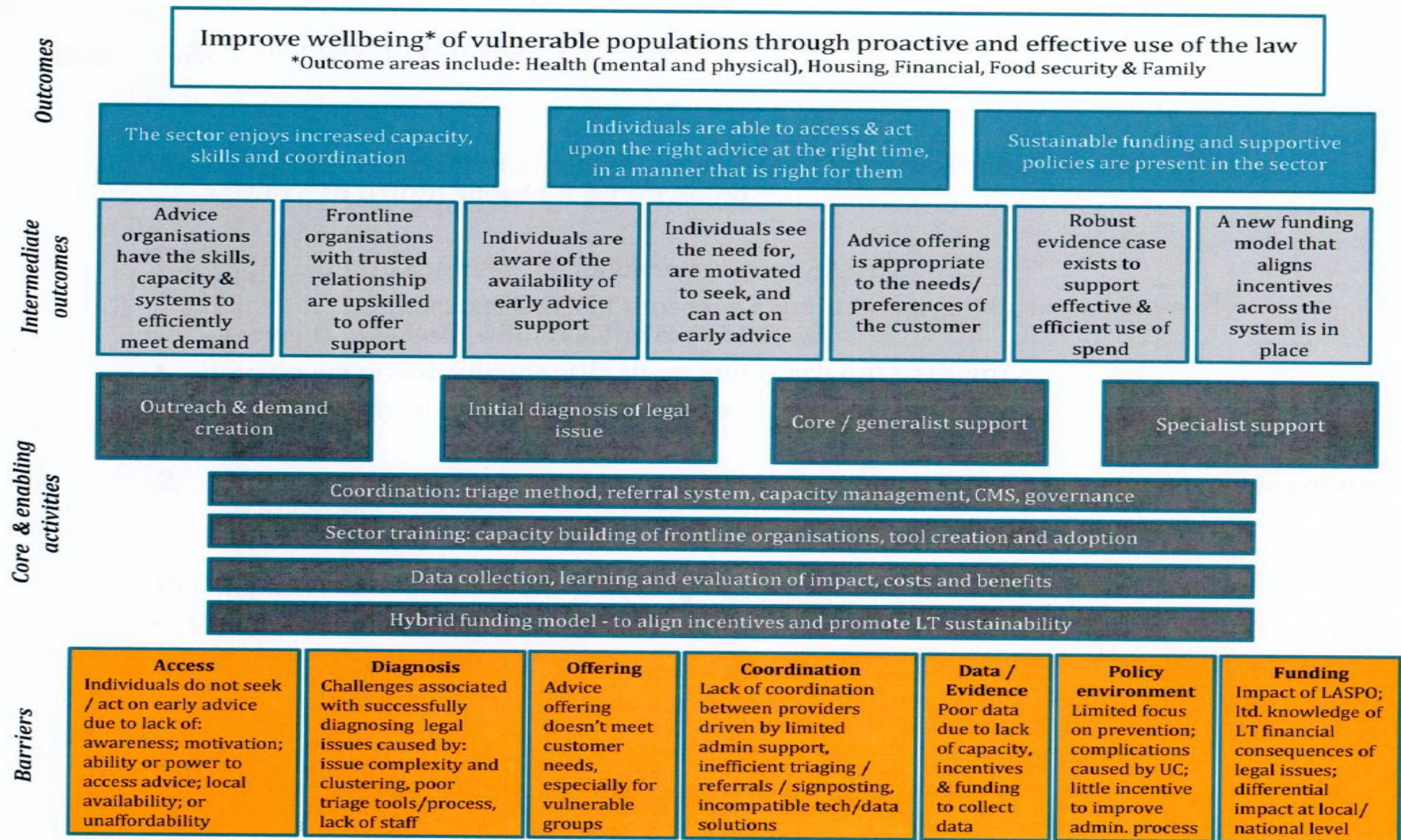
Real Life
Problems
and their
Solutions



Theory of Change Approaches?

- Widely adopted and supported by voluntary sector and by funders
- Work better for service delivery projects
- Work best for single interventions with well defined client group
- Support critical thinking by practitioners, which enhances practice
- Applied to very complex interventions and projects with no pathway
- Complexity at the expense of understanding
- Assumes practitioner's can generate 'what works' type knowledge





Advice Gives Access to Social Justice

Who are your target population?

What are their advice needs?

Have you accessed them?

What problems did you advise them on?

How can you prevent these problems?