



# MEL Training Materials

the **bizzell** group

**NORC** at the University of Chicago



DATAELEVATES



# Module 1

## Rationale and Foundations of ILAB's Theory of Sustained Change

March 2023



BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS

# Today's Trainers



Rachael  
Jackson  
Research Scientist  
NORC



Heather  
Britt  
Independent MEL  
Consultant

# A Picture is Worth 1000 Words

Which of these pictures represents how you feel about being here today and why?



# Our Training Session Goals

- Understand **ILAB's Theory of Sustained Change (TOSc)**
  - Describe the ILAB outcome domains and TOSc
  - Understand how the ILAB TOSc can be used for Labor Rights Programs
- Understand **Complexity-Aware Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (CAMEL) Basics**
  - Describe basic CAMEL principles and approaches
  - Understand the importance of CAMEL for ILAB labor rights programs
  - Understand how to enhance your project logic model with complexity

# Your Training Session Goals

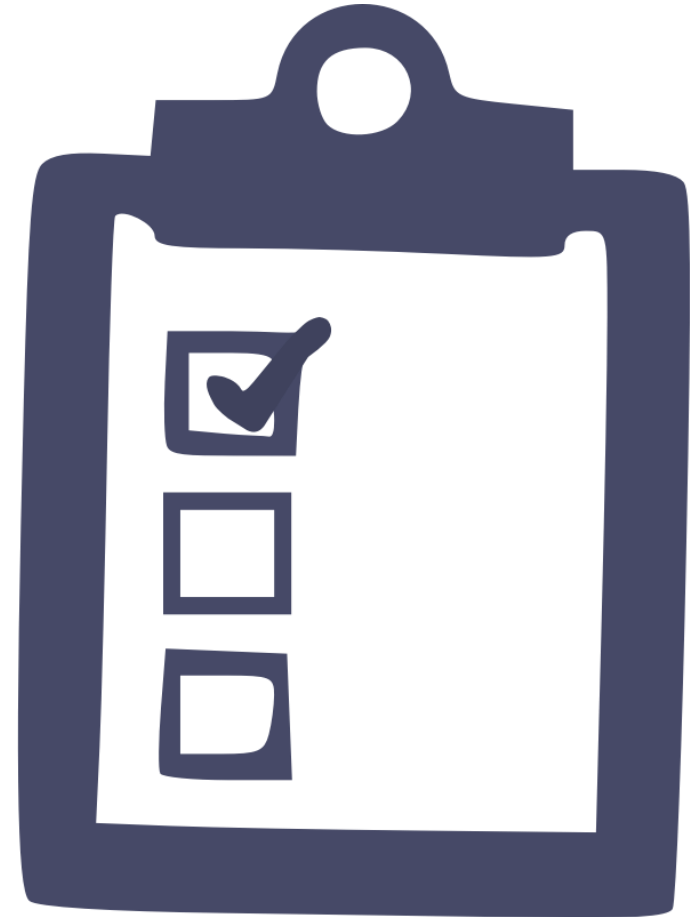
What would YOU like to get out of this workshop?

**“For me, this training session  
will be a success if...”**

1. Jot down your ideas on a piece of paper.
2. Share: Select one goal to share that has not been shared by someone else.

# Shared Norms for the Workshop

1. Enjoy each day. **Have fun.**
2. **Participate actively** by sharing your knowledge, opinions, and questions.
3. Be **on time.**
4. Cell phones and electronic **devices off** or on vibrate.



# Module 1 Agenda

**1** Why ILAB Developed a Theory of Sustained Change (TOSc)

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**2** Description of TOSc

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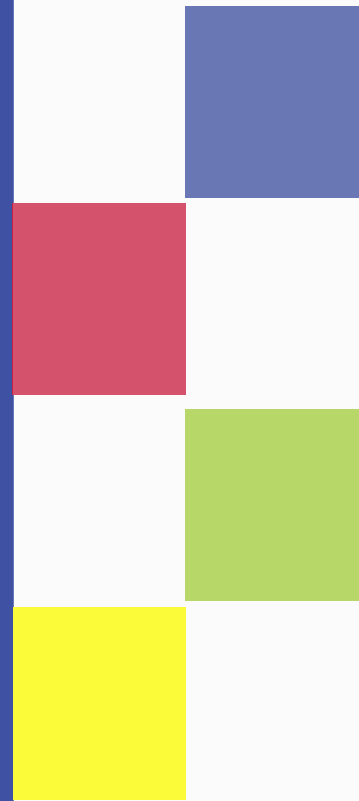
**3** Exercise

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# Section 1: Why ILAB Developed a Theory of Sustained Change (T0sC)

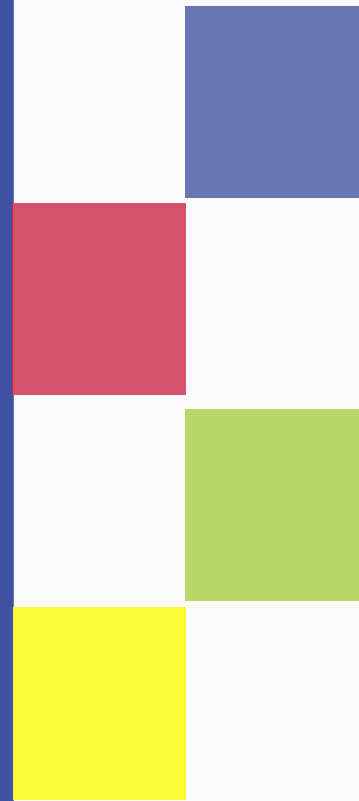


# ILAB uses both theory-based and complexity-aware approaches to tell the project story

<b>Program Theory-based MEL</b> (TOsC and logic model)	<b>Complexity-aware MEL</b> (unpredictable and outside project influence)
Predicted aspects of projects	Unpredictable aspects of projects
Results intended by donor/planner	Results beyond those originally intended by donor/planner
Planned pathways of change	Uncertain, contested, emergent, and dynamic aspects
Targets and indicators	No targets; often indicator-free  Evolving interrelationships between project and host system



# Section 1: Why ILAB Developed a Theory of Sustained Change (T0sC)



# How we got here...

2021

**Biden Trade Policy  
& Equity E.O.**

2021

2020

**GAO Study 21-190  
& Synthesis Review**

2020

2019

**ILAB Strategic  
Review**

2019

2018

**Evidence Act & OTLA  
Sustainability Guide**

2018

**FANTA Study**

2017

2017

2016

**FATAA**

2016

2014

**GAO Study 14-832**

2014

2010

**GPRMA**

2010

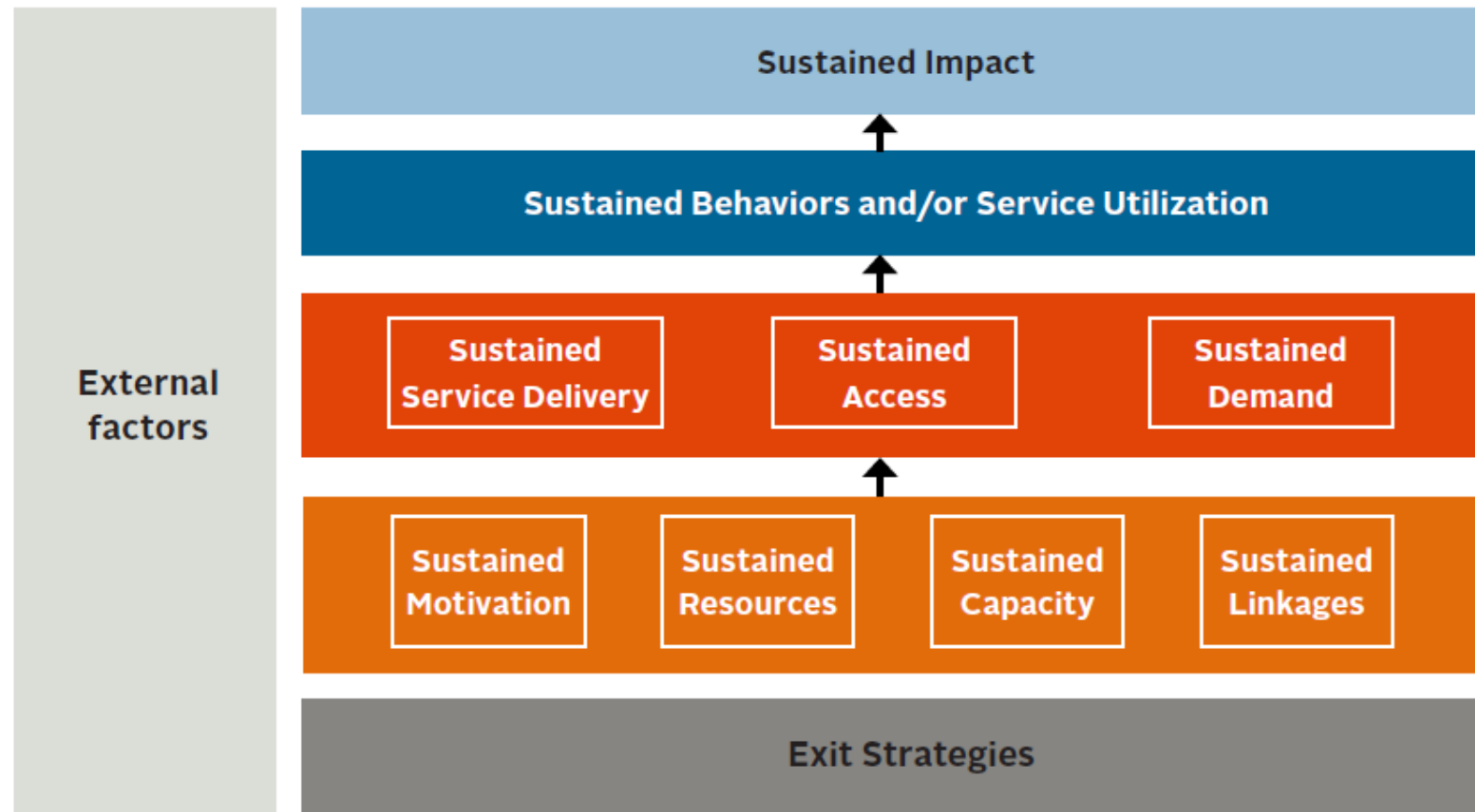


# Why ILAB developed a T0sC

- Desire to encourage sustainability of results
  - 6-7 Synthesis Evaluations (1995-2022)
  - FANTA study
  - ILAB Sustainability Guide
- Desire to clarify a general theory of change with standardized outcome domains while maintaining complexity-awareness and systems thinking
  - Mathematica Synthesis Review

# USAID FANTA Study (2017)

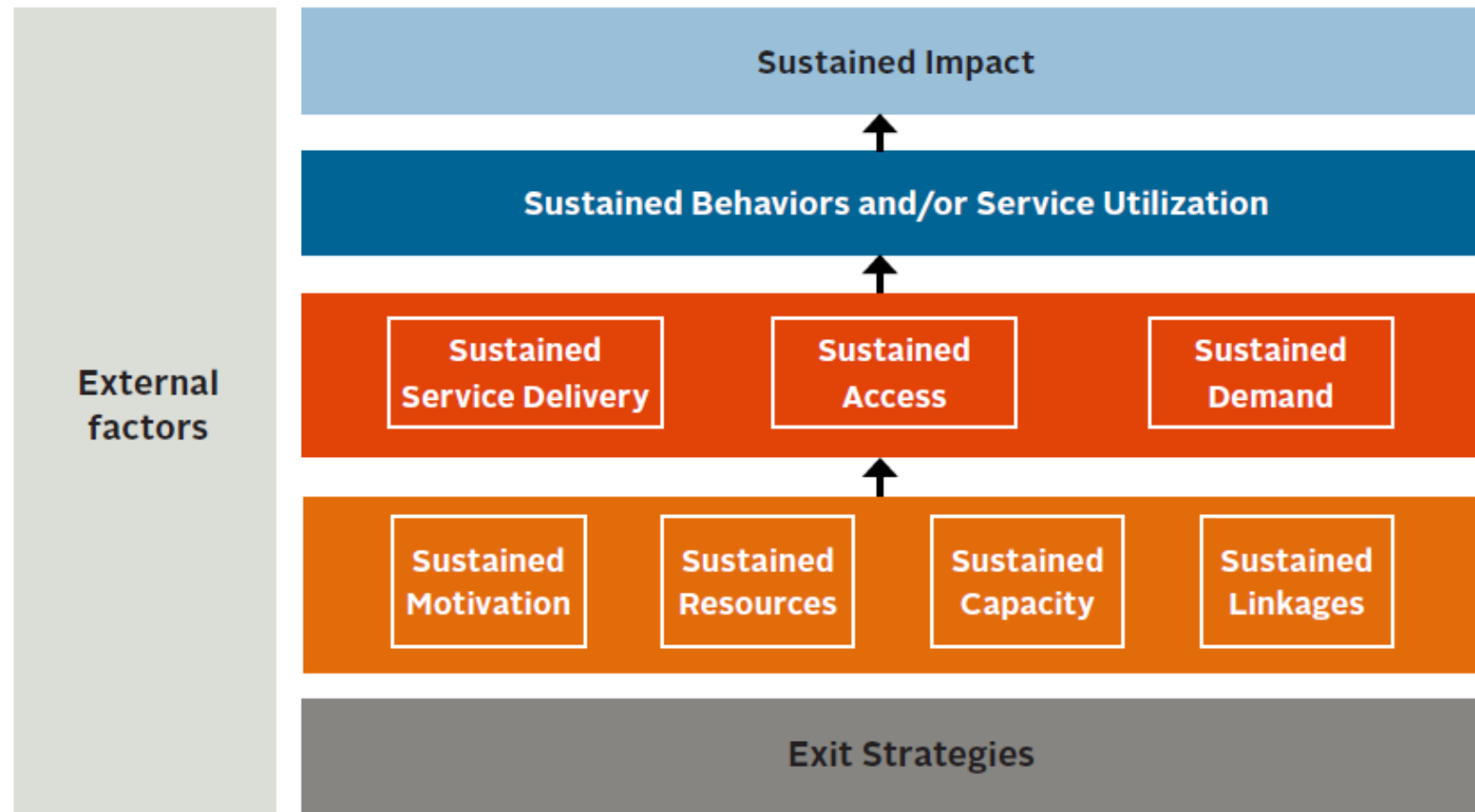
Figure 1. Sustainability and Exit Strategies Conceptual Framework



- Tufts University
- Studied 12 projects in 4 countries
- Found 4 factors critical to achieving sustainability:
  - Resources
  - Capacity
  - Motivation
  - Linkages

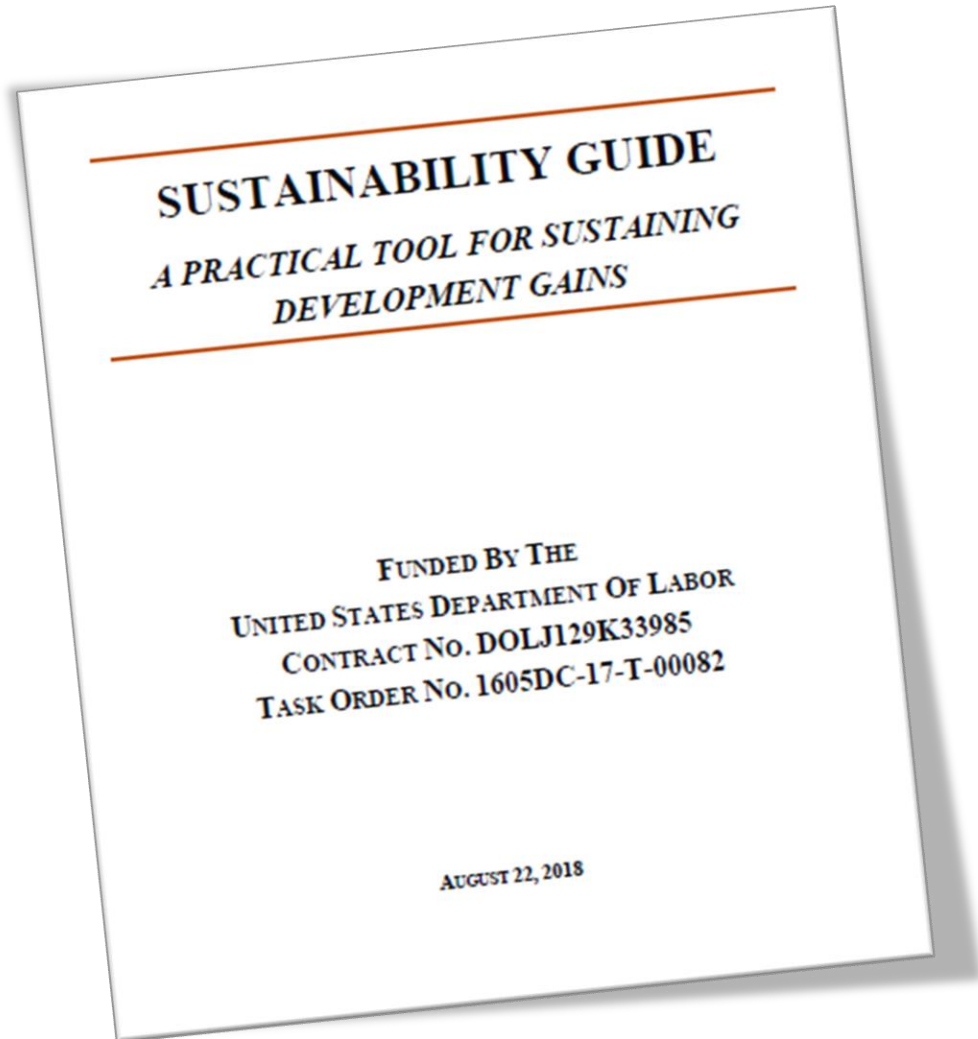
# USAID FANTA Study (2017)

Figure 1. Sustainability and Exit Strategies Conceptual Framework



- Project achievements at the time of the endline survey did not necessarily translate into sustained benefit for beneficiaries.
- **Focusing exclusively on achieving impact during the life of the project could jeopardize longer term sustainability.**

# OTLA Sustainability Guide (2018)



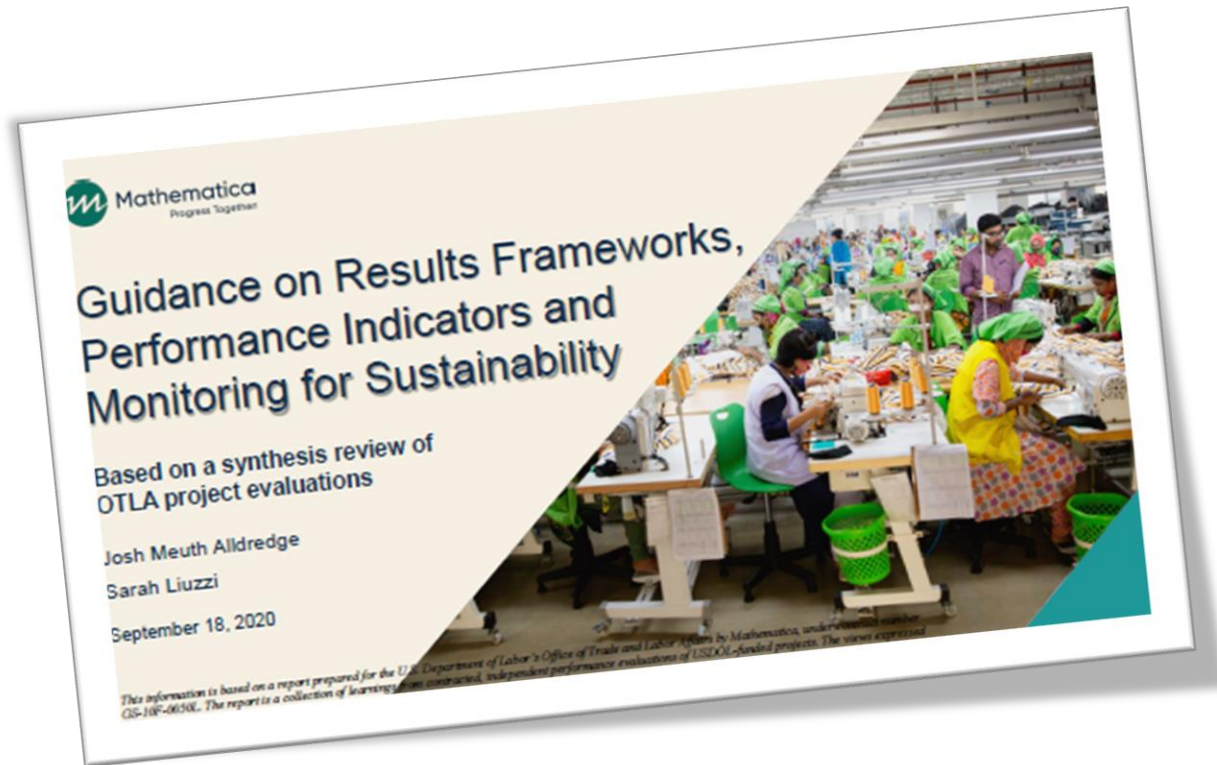
- Conclusion: **build sustainability during the project.**
- Provides a **sustainability checklist tool** for project design
- Includes **sustainability planning and implementation tools** for project management.



# Why ILAB developed a T0sC

- Desire to encourage sustainability of results
  - FANTA study
  - OTLA Sustainability Guide
- Desire to clarify a general theory of change with standardized outcome domains while allowing flexibility for complexity-awareness and systems thinking
  - Mathematica Synthesis Review

# Mathematica Synthesis Review (2020)



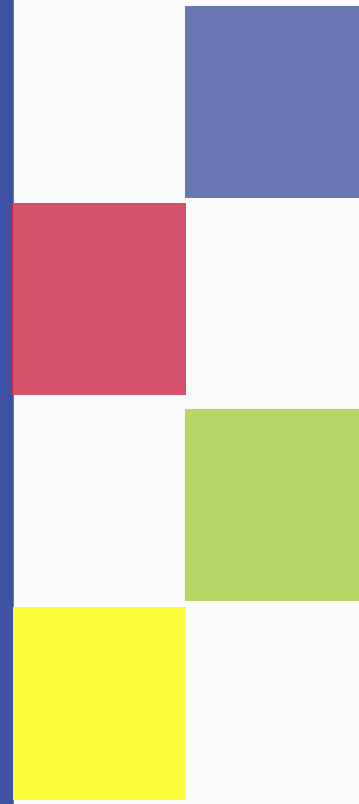
- Recommendations for ILAB:
  - Develop a **strong evidence-based theory of change** and codify it in a **results framework (RF)**.
  - Populate the RF with a set of indicators, including **standard indicators**, used across projects to facilitate cross-project comparison.

# Why Theory of SUSTAINED Change?

**We may not know HOW change will occur,  
but we do know what makes it last**



## Section 2: Theory of Sustained Change



# What is the change we seek?



## The Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB)

ILAB safeguards dignity at work, both at home and abroad – by strengthening global labor standards, enforcing labor commitments among trading partners, promoting racial and gender equity, and combating international child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking.

# 5 Fundamental Labor Rights

1. **Freedom of association** and the effective recognition of the right to **collective bargaining**
2. The **elimination of** all forms of **forced or compulsory labor**
3. The effective **abolition of child labor**
4. The **elimination of discrimination** in respect to employment and occupation
5. A **safe and healthy working environment**

# 9 Outcome Domains in 3 Categories of Change



## Available Capital

Available capital includes the various resources that a community can access to support labor rights. These resources are necessary to bring about any change. They include:

1. Linkages/Networks
2. Human Capacity
3. Replacement Resources



## Leverage Points

Leverage points are places in a system where a project can intervene to encourage changes in causal mechanisms that lead to changes in respect for labor rights. Leverage points of interest to OTLA include:

4. Motivation/Mental Models
5. Demand for Services
6. Access to Services
7. Delivery of Services



## Causal Mechanisms

Causal mechanisms are the areas that must change to sustainably improve the respect for fundamental labor rights. OTLA hypothesizes that capital and leverage points impact labor rights by leading to changes in these causal mechanisms:

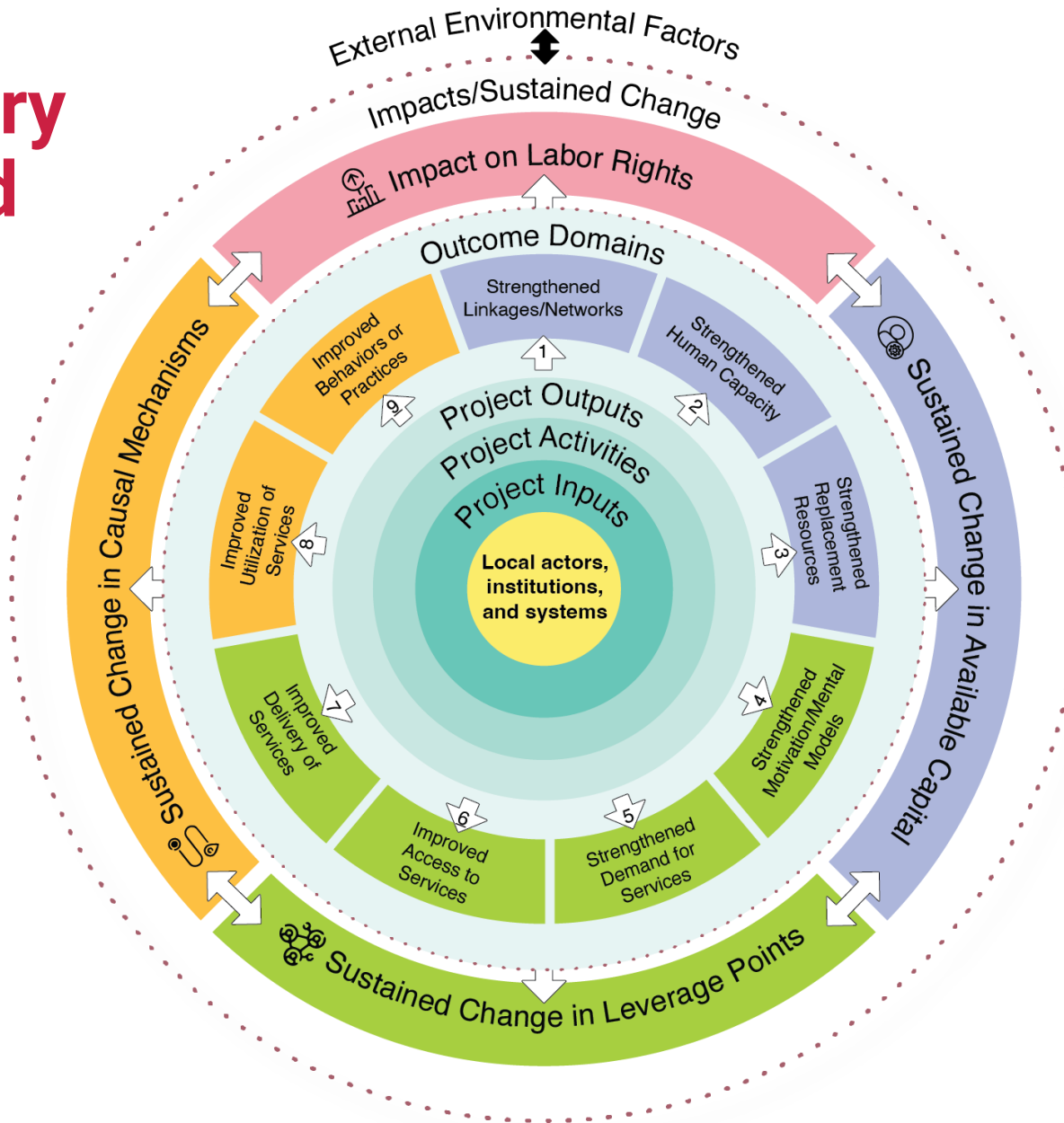
8. Utilization of Services
9. Behaviors and Practices

# Why use the term “outcome domain”?

- “Domains” allow flexibility in position on the causal chain
- Several concepts can fit within a single outcome domain



# ILAB's Theory of Sustained Change

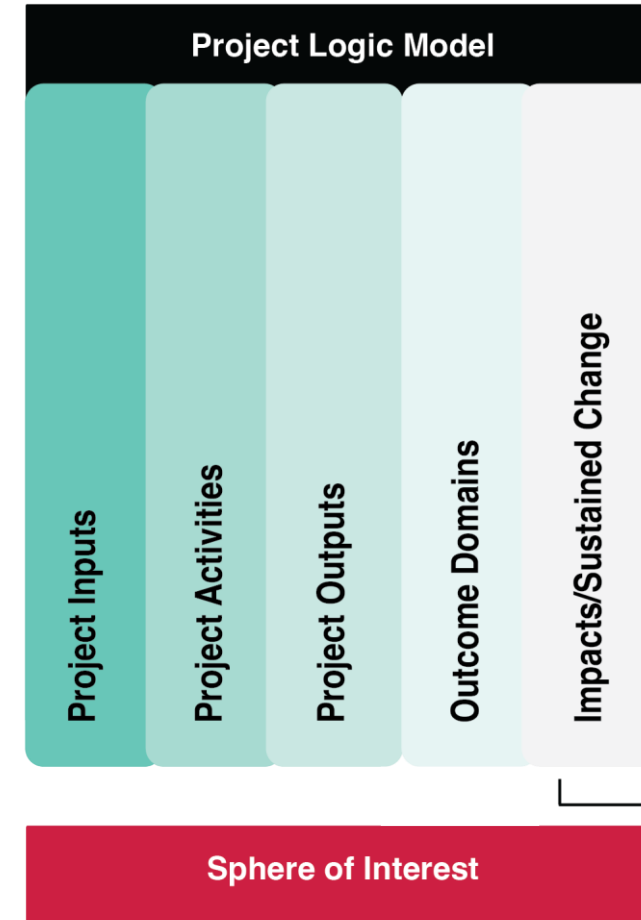
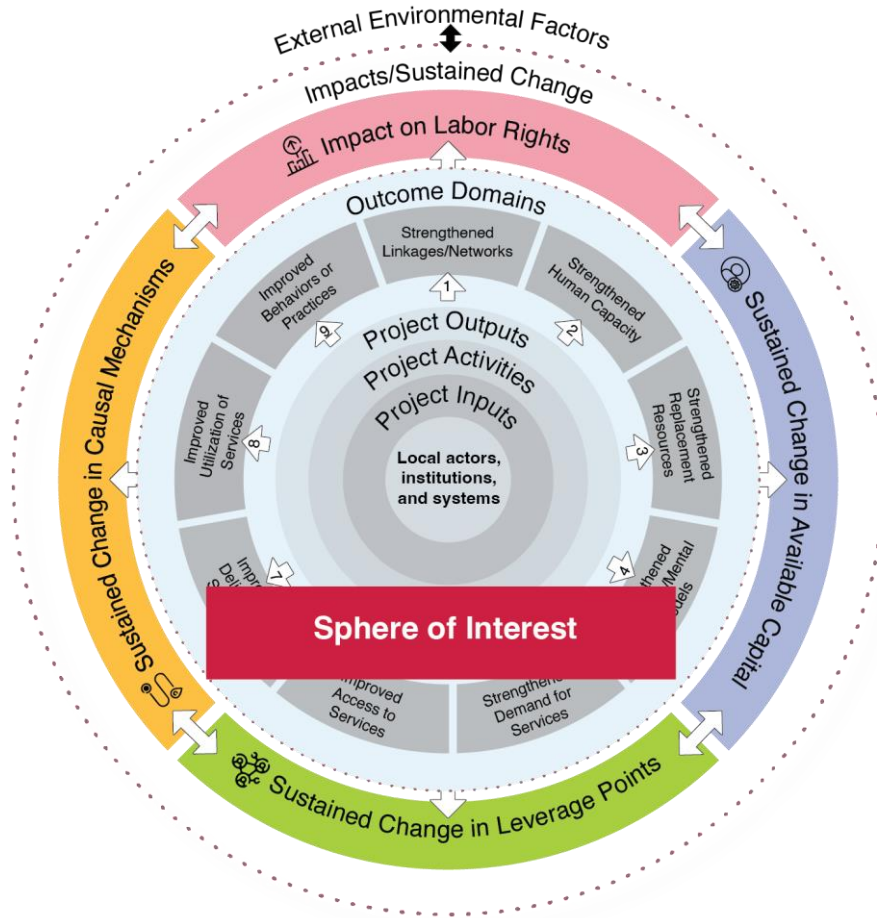


- Outcome domains and sustained changes related to **AVAILABLE CAPITAL**
- Outcome domains and sustained changes related to **LEVERAGE POINTS**
- Outcome domains and sustained changes related to **CAUSAL MECHANISMS**
- IMPACT** on labor rights

# System Approach

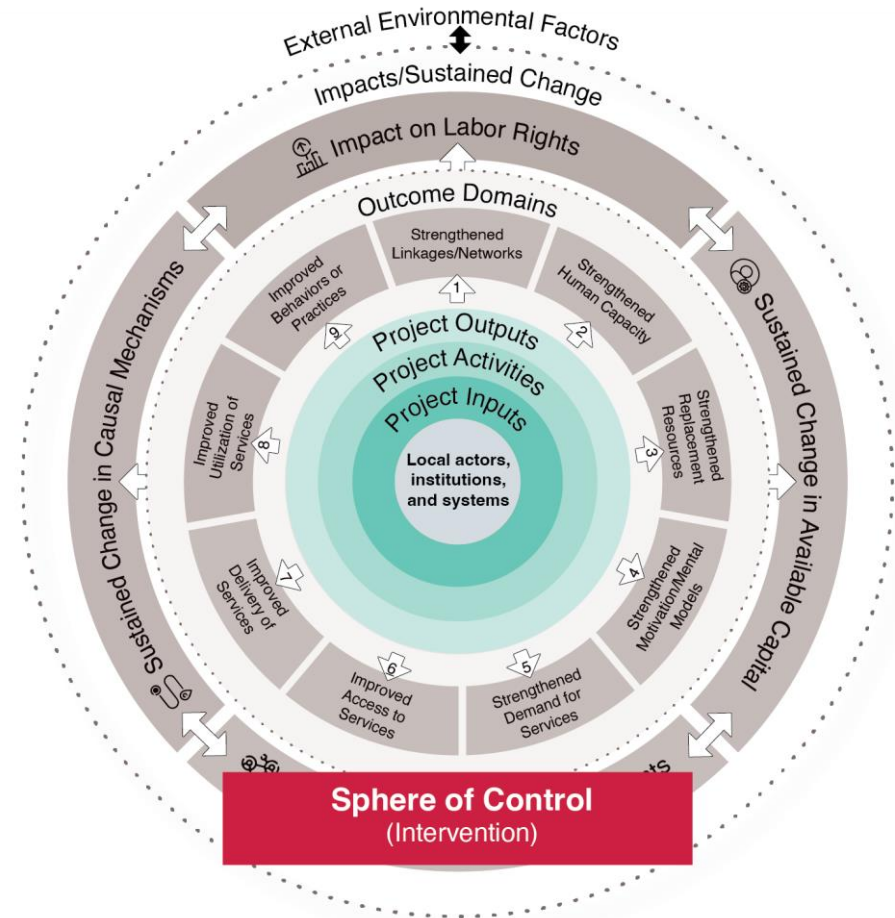
- What is a system?
  - ILAB defines a system as: A set of elements or parts that is coherently **organized and inter-connected** in a pattern or structure that produces a characteristic set of behaviors, often classified as its **'function' or 'purpose.'** No one person or organization can influence the entire system, but working together, the group can move towards systems change.
- ILAB acknowledges that projects exist in a mutually influencing relationship with their context
- Projects need to acknowledge systems in their project design and MEL systems

# Spheres of Control, Influence, and Interest



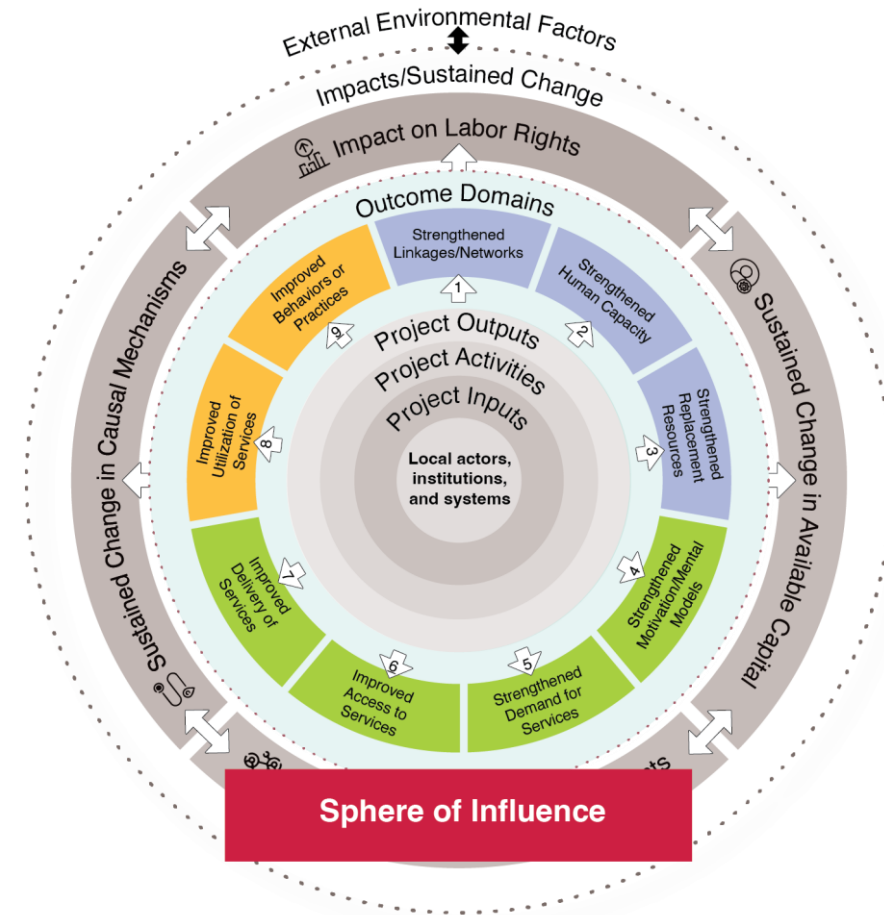
# Sphere of Control

- **Project inputs, activities, and outputs** that make up a project's intervention
- Projects can typically control how their resources are spent to conduct activities with certain outputs



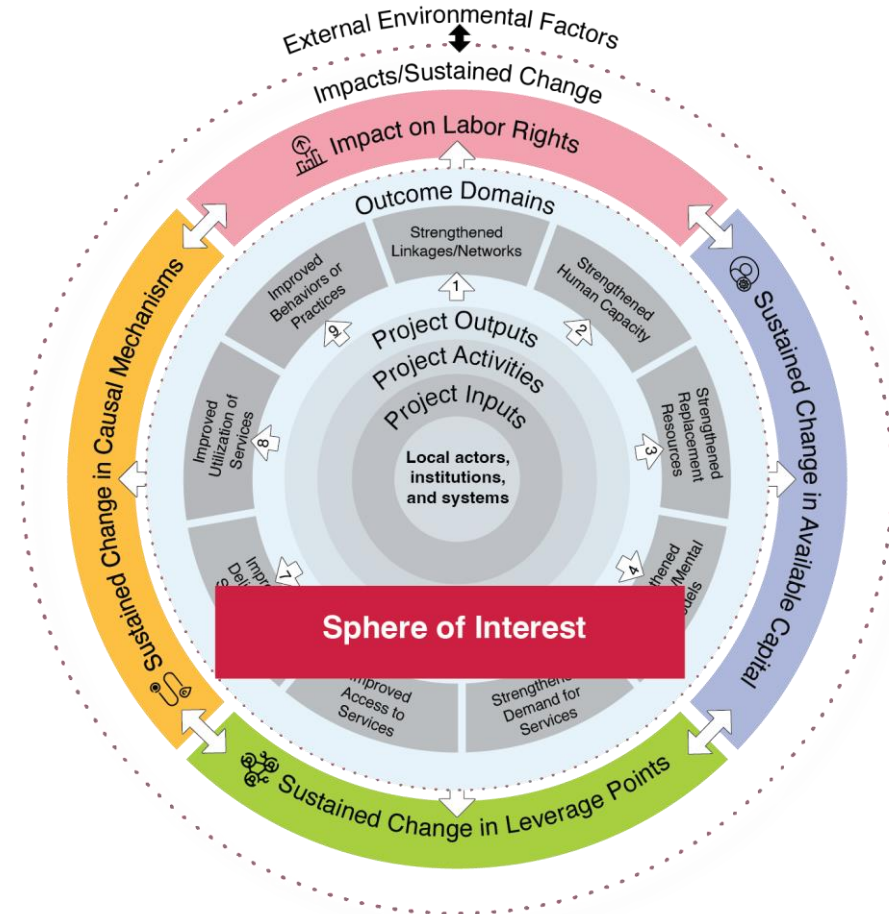
# Sphere of Influence

- **Project outcomes**
- Even if a project is perfectly implemented and is based on a logically sound Theory of Change (TOC), projects cannot control the responses that people and institutions have to their project.
- External factors will affect the project's ability to achieve the desired outcomes.

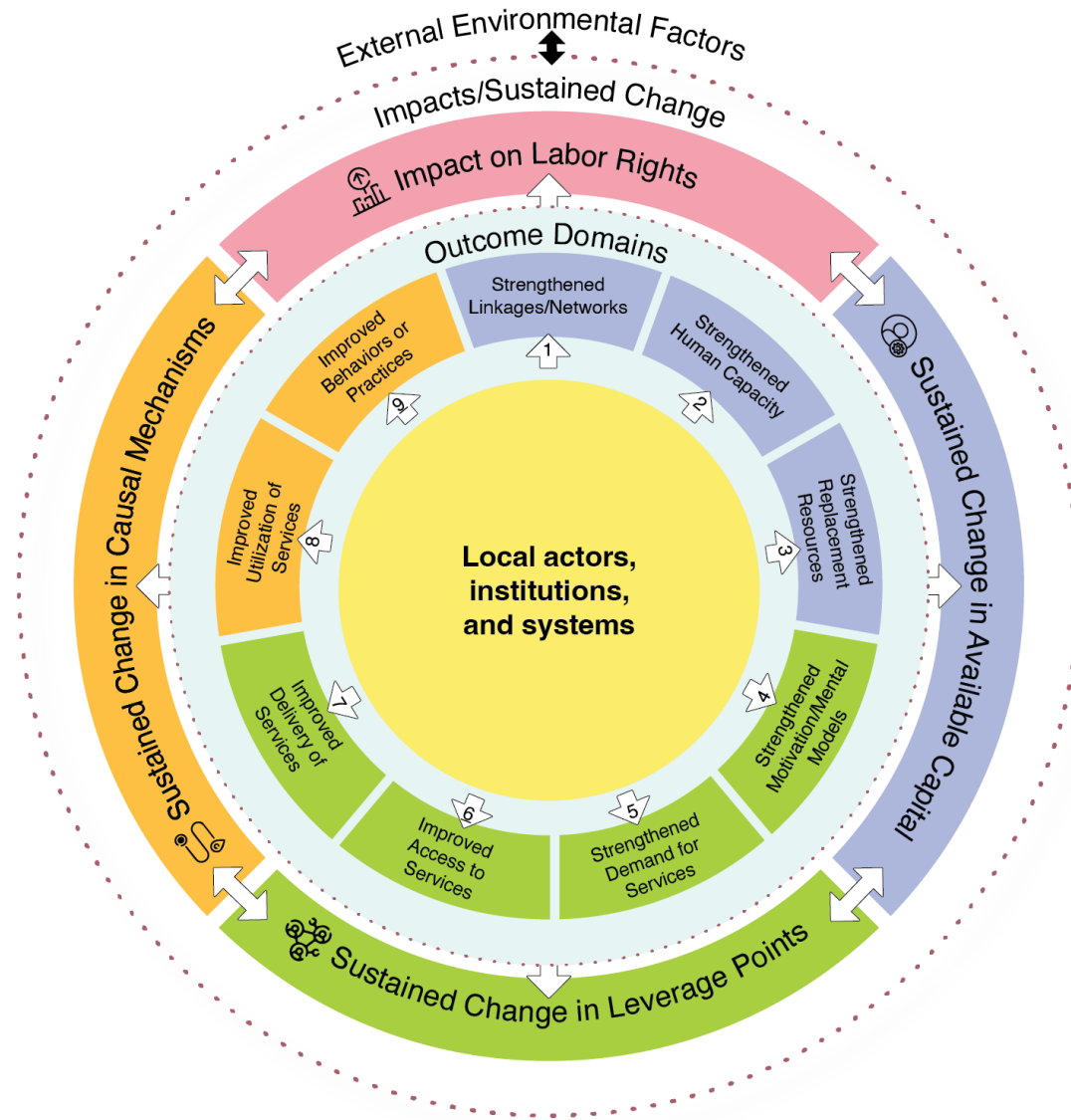


# Sphere of Interest

- ***Sustained change and impact***
- May begin during the life of the project, but they often are not confirmed until after the project is complete.
- ILAB and/or its grantee may want to follow up with the community after the project has ended to learn whether the changes were sustained. But after the project has ended, it can no longer influence outcomes or impacts.



# Sustainability in the TOsC



# External Environment

- Two-way relationship between the project and the external environment
  - The project is designed to affect the external environment
  - External environment is likely to affect the project



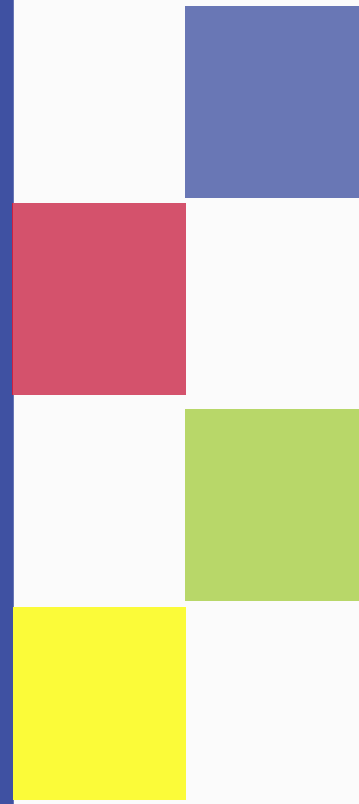


# **BREAK**

Feel free to turn your camera off and go on mute. Please return in 7 minutes. When we return, we will begin an exercise.



# Section 3: Exercise



# Safe Farm Workers' Initiative (SFWI)

- Background
  - Location: Otlandia
  - Industry: Agriculture
  - Problems addressed by SFWI:
    - Long hours
    - Low pay
    - Inadequate safety standards
  - Root causes:
    - Lack of government enforcement of labor safety standards
    - Decreased worker demand for safe working conditions

# Safe Farm Workers' Initiative (SFWI)

- **Intervention**

- Implement a hotline for agriculture workers to report unsafe working conditions
- Hold information sessions with agriculture workers about their right to safe working conditions and the existence of the hotline to support them if that right is violated
- Share reports through presentations and round table discussions of unsafe working conditions (from hotline data) with the labor inspectorate and advocate for their intervention to enforce safety standards

# Small Group Exercise Instructions

- Review the following logic model.
- Identity the spheres of control, influence and interest.
  - Put your choices in the red boxes below each column.
- Identify the ILAB TOSc outcome domains related to each group of desired outcomes and sustained changes on SFWI's logic model.
  - Put your choices in the blank boxes beside the outcomes and above the sustained changes.

### Project Activity/Outputs

The project will:

1. Create and run a hotline for reporting unsafe working conditions
2. Conduct awareness raising activities
3. Generate cases of unsafe working conditions
4. Advocate for government intervention in hotline cases

### Outcomes and Outcome Domains

- Workers call into the hotline to report unsafe conditions
- Workers demand safe working conditions from their employers
- Workers demand government enforcement of safety standards

→

- The government conducts more labor inspections
- The government better enforces safety standards

→

- The government institutionalizes the hotline and related labor inspections

### Sustained Change

- Workers continue to call into the hotline to report unsafe conditions, as needed
- Workers continue to demand for safe working conditions from their employers
- Workers continue to demand government enforcement of safety standards

- The government continues to conduct more labor inspections
- The government continues to better enforce safety standards

### Impact

- Improved working conditions
- Employers improve working conditions



# Small Group Exercise Instructions

- Discuss as a group:
  - How easy or challenging did you find this activity? What made it easy or challenging?
  - Are there any aspects of SFWI's logic model that could be changed or clarified to make the link between SFWI outcomes and ILAB outcome domains clearer?

# Questions?