

Health service delivery – moving from ‘what is’ to ‘what it ought to be’

Patti E. Gravitt, PhD, MS
Deputy Director

Moving ‘what is’ in a health system to ‘what it ought to be’

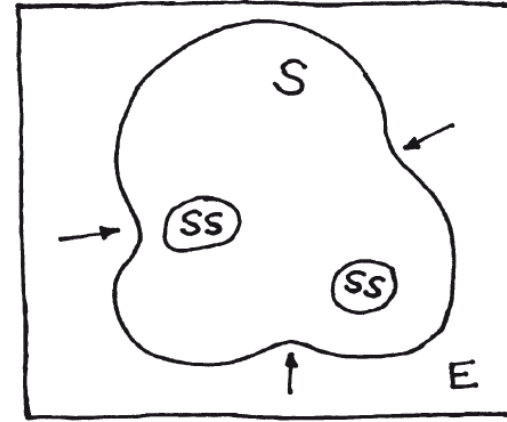
How can we most effectively do this?

Soft systems methodology

- “Soft systems methodology (SSM) is an **action-oriented process of inquiry** into problematical situations in the everyday world; users learn their way from **finding out** about the situation to **defining/taking action** to improve it. The **learning emerges via an organized process** in which the real situation is explore, **using as intellectual devices** – which serve to provide structure to discussion – **models of purposeful activity** built to encapsulate pure, stated worldviews.

Core systems idea of complex, adaptive system (CAS)

- Communication processes (know what is going on)
- Control processes (adaptive responses)
- Layered structure (sub-systems)
- Emergent properties (more than a sum of parts)



S : system
SS : sub-system
E : environment

Survival of S through time requires :

- o communication processes
- o control processes
- o structure in layers
- o emergent properties of S as a whole

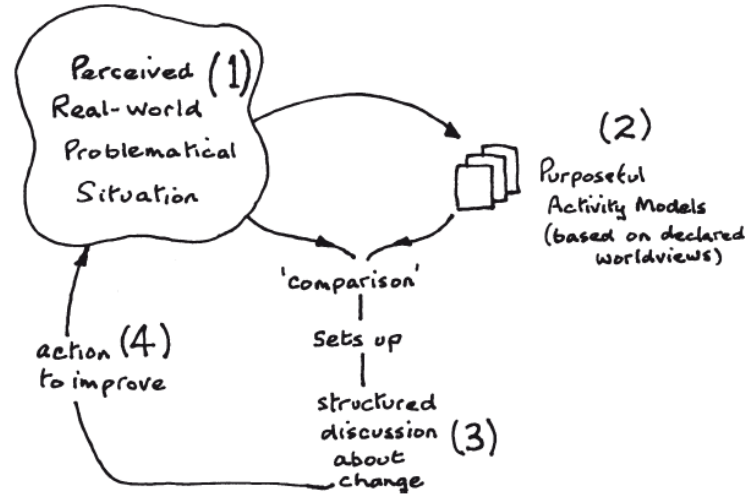


Fig. 5.9 The iconic representation of SSM's learning cycle

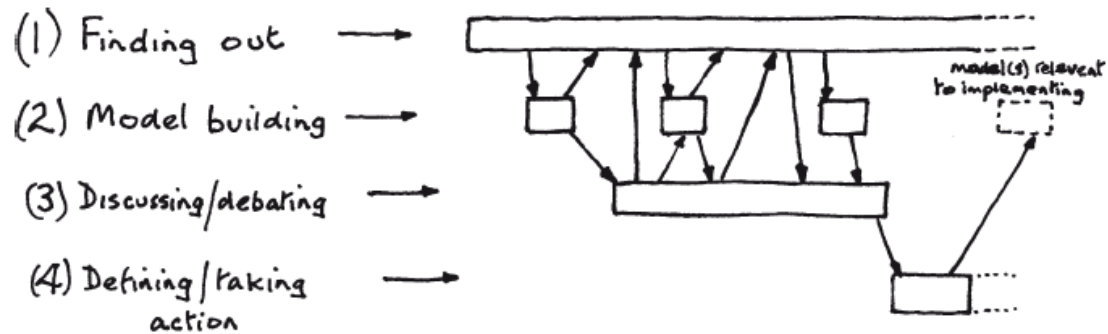
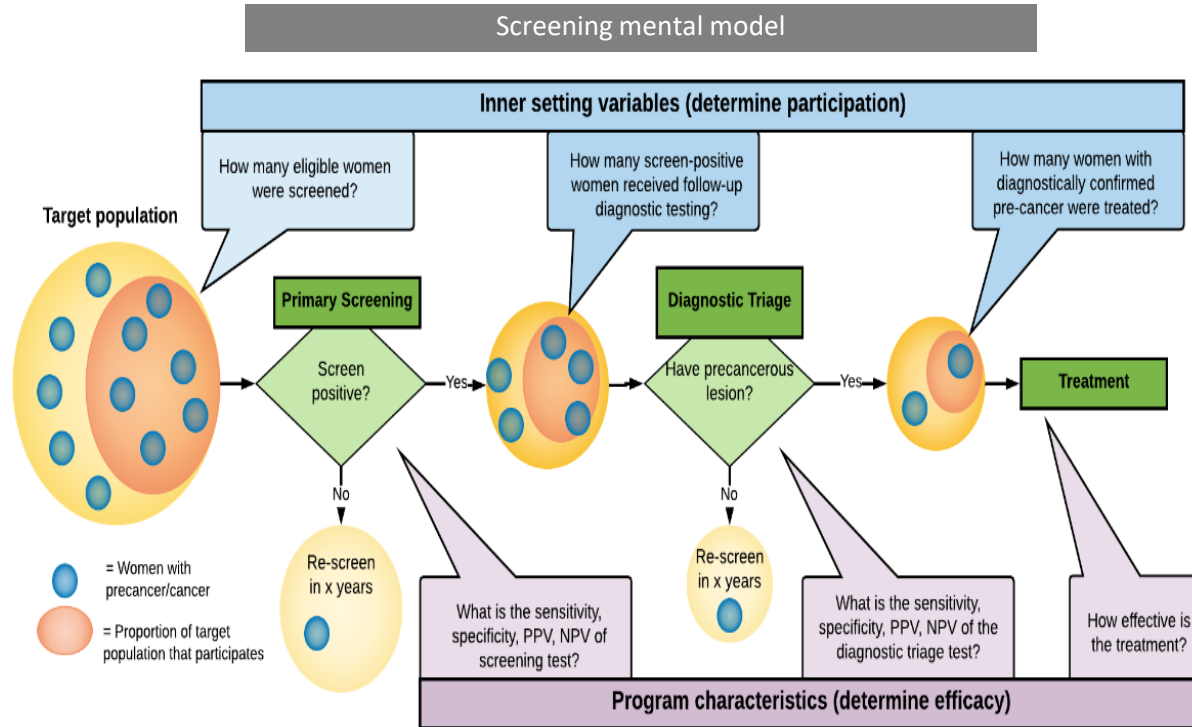


Fig. 5.10 A typical pattern of activity during an SSM investigation

Phase 1 – Understand the system

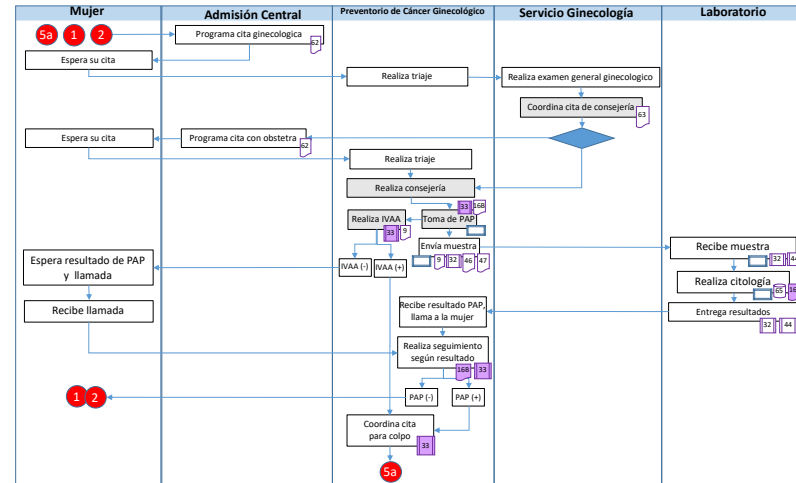
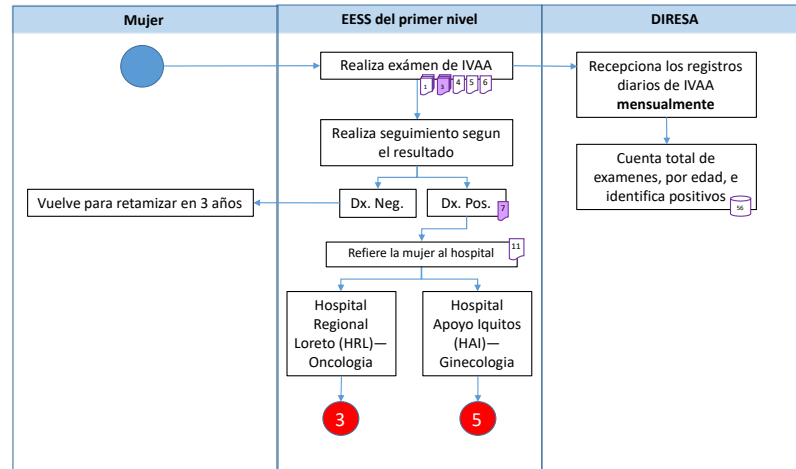
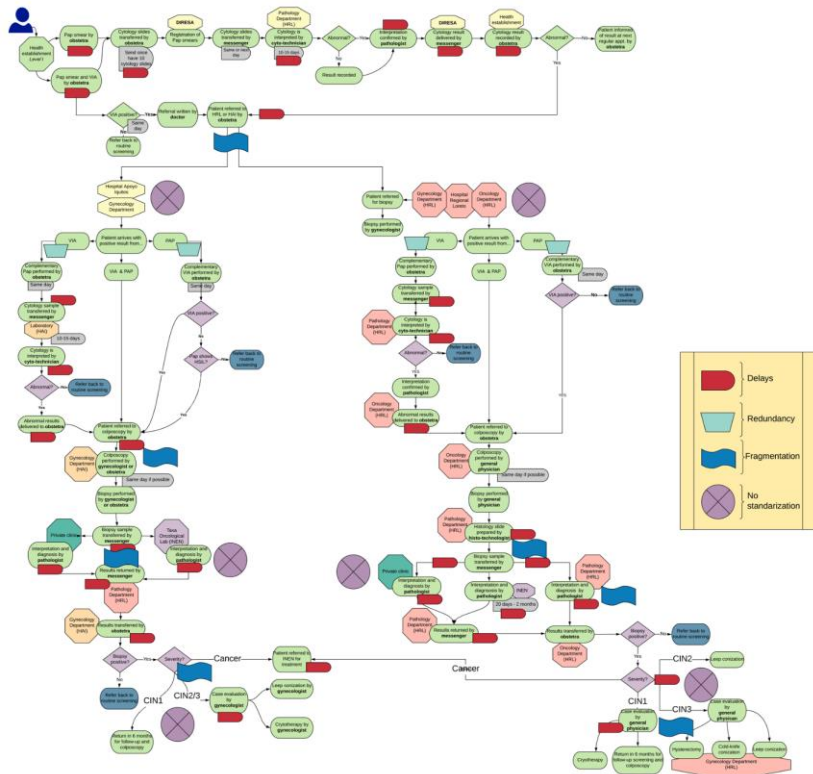
used interviews/focus groups and data audits guided by our mental model

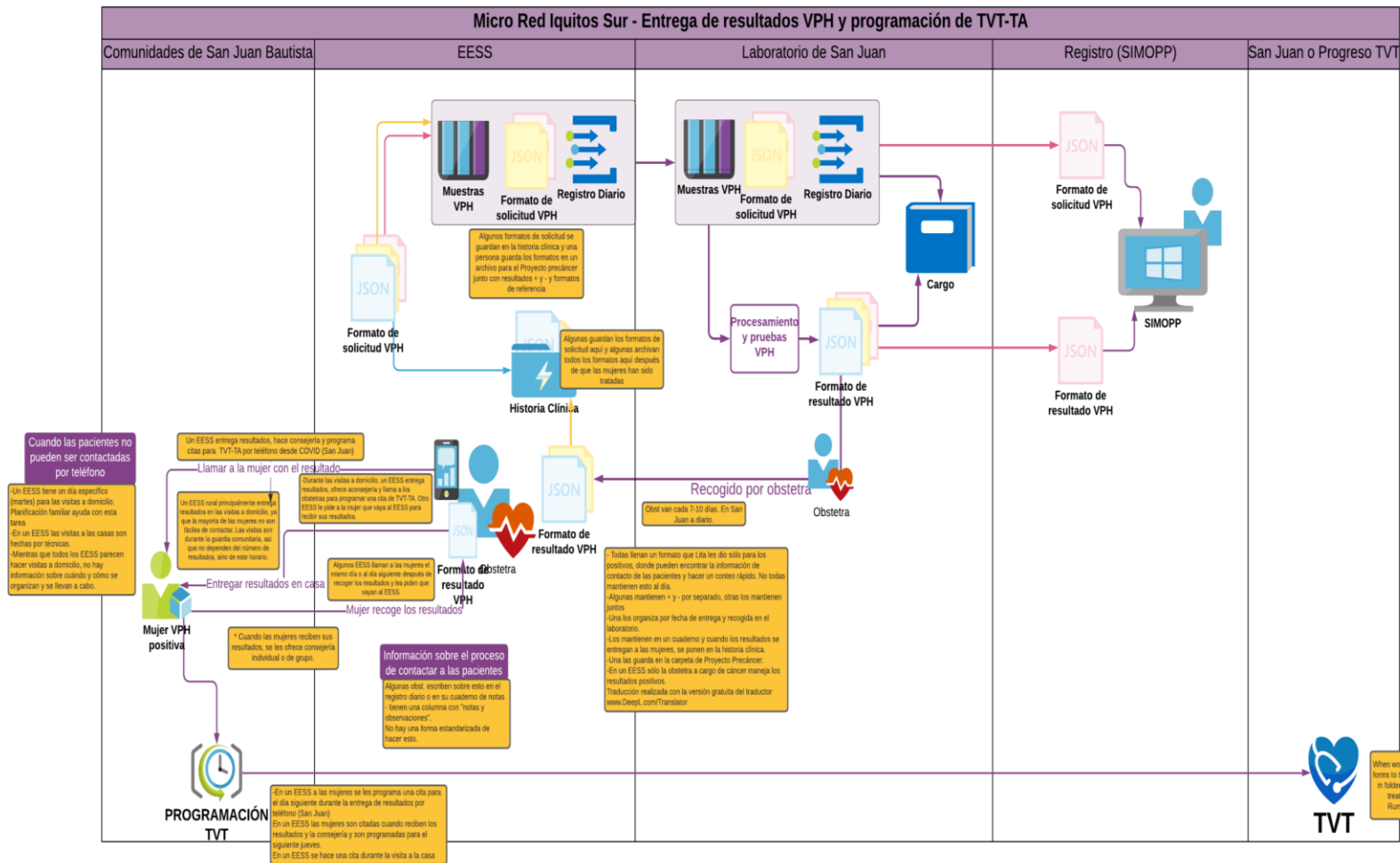


- In 2017-2018, we conducted many qualitative interviews and did system audits of data to show how the current screening system (mix of Pap and IVAA) was structured and how it was working. This work was guided by the mental model of screening.
- We reviewed transcripts of interviews and focus groups and made several visual representations of the system using flow-charts and swimlanes.
 - STEPS 3&4 of INSPIRE

Phase 1 – Understand the system
Make the system visible (Step 5 of INSPIRE)

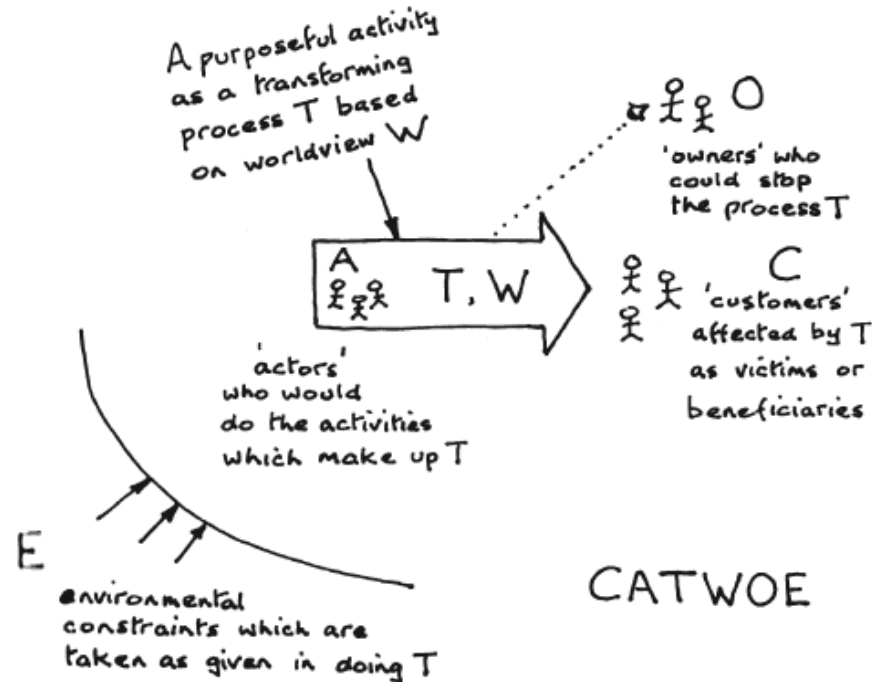
Make the system visible (Step 5 of INSPIRE)





CATWOE

- **C**ustomers
- **A**ctivities done y people to make "T"
- **T**ransformational process
- **W**orldview
- **O**wners who can stop or change purposeful activity
- **E**nvironmental constraints on change



Monitoring and control activities

- What are the measures of performance by which operation of notional system will be judged? What are KPIs, implementation metrics, indicators??
 - Efficacy: Is T \rightarrow intended outcome?
 - Efficiency: Is T using minimal resources?
 - Effectiveness: Is T achieving higher level of longer term aim?
 - Elegance? Ethicality?

Goals of SSM

- Find a version of real world situation and ways to improve it which different people with different worldviews can *'live with'*. *Outside of arbitrary exercise of power*, this is the necessary condition which must be met in any human group if agreed 'action to improve' is to be defined.
- GOAL – find *accommodation*, not consensus

Three change elements



Change in structures



Change in processes/procedures



Change in attitudes



Think about what enabling actions must take place to implement improvement

Craft skills

- Process of SSM addresses complex human situations, mentally, by the conscious organized use of particular ideas and principles in order to achieve *sense-making*
- Banish all thought of finding a permanent *solution*, or optimum way of doing something in any human situation
- Try not to impose structure on the situation (no judgement zone)
- Methodology simply structures thinking
- Aim is to give away the approach being used to the people in the situation itself. Don't hang on to ownership
- Be ready to be surprised. Outcomes are derived from the always-present tension between the glorious mix of altruistic behavior directed to group aims and the selfish pursuit of personal agendas which is never absent from human affairs.
- Desirable and feasible action may not be implementable by those undertaking the study who may not have necessary power
- Don't let the investigation ever feel like work.



**NATIONAL
CANCER
INSTITUTE**

cancer.gov

cancer.gov/espanol