Using Theory of Change for Impact Evaluation

Patricia Rogers
RMIT University/ BetterEvaluation
Theory of Change

Patricia Rogers
UNICEF Impact Evaluation Briefs

1. Overview of Impact Evaluation
2. Theory of Change
3. Evaluative Criteria
4. Evaluative Reasoning
5. Participatory Approaches
6. Overview: Strategies for Causal Attribution
7. Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)
8. Quasi-Experimental Design and Methods
9. Comparative Case Studies
11. Developing and Selecting Measures of Child Well-Being
12. Interviewing
13. Modelling
POLL: What experience have you had using a theory of change for M & E?

1. None.
2. I’ve been involved in a project or program where there was an existing theory of change but it was not really used much for monitoring and/or evaluation.
3. I’ve helped to develop a theory of change for a project or program.
4. I’ve used an existing theory of change to guide monitoring and evaluation.
5. I’ve helped to develop a theory of change and use it for monitoring and/or evaluation.
Overview of Theory of Change (ToC) webinar

1. What is a ToC?
2. How to develop a ToC?
3. How to represent a ToC?
4. How to use a ToC in impact evaluation?
1. What is a Theory of Change?

WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

WHAT WE DO
1. What is a Theory of Change?

WHAT WE DO

WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME

WHAT WE DO
1. What is a Theory of Change?
1. What is a Theory of Change?

- WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE
  - How does this happen?
- INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME
  - How does this happen?
  - How does this happen?
- INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME
  - How does this happen?
- WHAT WE DO
- WHAT OTHERS DO
1. What is a Theory of Change?
1. What is a Theory of Change?

WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME

WHAT OTHERS DO

OTHER IMPACTS

WHAT WE DO

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME

WHAT OTHERS DO

WHAT WE DO
Theory of change presented in a results chain

2. How to develop a ToC?

• Conduct a situation analysis – problems, needs, causes and consequences, strengths and opportunities

• Clarify what aspects the intervention will address and intended outcomes and impacts

• Develop a theory of how to achieve these
2. How to develop a ToC?

Draw on a range of sources:

– Needs assessment
– Documented objectives
– Previous research and evaluation – theories and practice
– Expert opinion
– Stakeholders’ mental models and feedback
Theories about how change comes about and how the intervention can trigger the change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual change: transformative change of a critical mass of individuals</th>
<th>Investment in individual change through training, personal transformation/ consciousness-raising workshops or processes; dialogues and encounter groups; trauma healing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health relationships and connections: breakdown isolation, polarization, division, prejudice and stereotypes between/among groups</td>
<td>Process of inter-group dialogue; networking; relationship building processes; joint efforts and practical programmes on substantive problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root causes/justice: address underlying issues of injustice, oppression/exploitation, threats to identity and security, and people’s sense of injury/victimization</td>
<td>Long-term campaigns for social and structural change; truth and reconciliation; changes in social institutions, laws, regulations and economic systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional development: establish stable/reliable social institutions that guarantee democracy, equity, justice and fair allocation of resources</td>
<td>New institutional and governance arrangements/entities; development of human rights, rule of law, anti-corruption; establishment of democratic/equitable economic structures; decentralization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass roots mobilization: mobilizing the community so that politicians have to pay attention</td>
<td>Mobilize grass roots groups, non-violent direct action campaigns, use of the media, education/mobilization efforts, advocacy groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How to represent a ToC?
Simplified version of the theory of change

Theory of change for the Child Support Grant, South Africa

4. How to use a ToC for impact evaluation?
Schematic Depiction of a Theory of Change, Peer Review Group meeting

Detailed theory of change showing multiple causal paths and availability of supporting evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities (inputs)</th>
<th>Short-term changes</th>
<th>Medium-term changes</th>
<th>Long-term changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in the relevant social norms underlying the practice of FGM/C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in FGM/C prevalence leading to the eventual total abandonme nt of the practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the community level, key steps in the process of collective social change are:</td>
<td>Strengthened and explicit community commitment to ending FGM/C, as, for example, evidenced in public declarations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The joint programme contributes to this process of change through the following types of activities:</td>
<td>At the national level, an enabling environment is built strengthened by:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating, coordinating, maintaining networks and partnerships</td>
<td>At the regional and global level, an enabling environment is built strengthened by:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy, policy dialogue, resource mobilization</td>
<td>Legal and policy reform</td>
<td>Increased awareness, and buy-in and commitment among regional and global stakeholders in favour of the abandonment of FGM/C (and the switch approach to it)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity development (e.g. training, technical support, system building)</td>
<td>Strengthened capacities of national stakeholders</td>
<td>Strengthened knowledge production and circulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support South-South cooperation</td>
<td>Effective media campaigns and other forms of public communication:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to communication, sensitization and awareness raising</td>
<td>Accurate data and relevant, culturally sensitive knowledge of the practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to community education, dialogue and community-led initiatives</td>
<td>Partnerships among key stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data and knowledge generation, management, and circulation (including M&amp;E)</td>
<td>At the community level, key steps in the process of collective social change are:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context assumption: Joint programme taking place in favourable country environments for work on accelerating change, e.g. due to some previous work on FGM/C; some public support; and government commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theory of change for the Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Programme

Theory of change for multi-country evaluation on increasing access and equity in early childhood education

Using Theory of Change for Impact Evaluation

1. DEFINING - Make sure it is a real theory of change
2. DEVELOPING - Draw from different sources to develop or revise the theory of change
3. REPRESENTING - Choose an appropriate form
4. USING – Use it to guide data collection, analysis and reporting