

## 2b.TS1 What Is A Theory of Change and What Is A Logic Model?

Evaluators often ask groups to create two tools: one is called “a theory of change” and the other is called a “logic model.” The terms are fairly recent (in the last ten years or so). People sometimes use the terms interchangeably. People also use the terms for different things - there is not just one idea about what a theory of change is, or what a logic model is. The tools and resources in this website that involve theories of change or logic models usually give a definition or illustration.

For purposes of the tip sheets in this website, we are talking about the following:

- A theory of change is usually in the form of a picture. The picture shows the **steps** the group is thinking about taking to reach its goals, and **why** they think those steps will lead to the change they want. This is sometimes referred to as the pathway to change or the chain of influence leading to change.
  - A group has to understand its assumptions about how they think change happens in order to create a theory of change picture
  - The process to understand these assumptions is very helpful to a group
  - The process shows where members of the group agree and disagree about what it will take to create the change they want
  - It also helps the group see whether or not they have included all the steps it will take to get to the change they want
  - That’s why it can be important for groups to come up with a theory of change picture as part of their planning work, and to go back and revise it as their work moves along - even if they are not planning a formal evaluation.
- A logic model is usually in the form of a chart. The chart also lists the **steps** that the group is planning to implement, usually as particular activities or strategies. The chart also lists what the group thinks the important **results** of those steps will be, usually in the form of **short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes**.
  - A group has to think about what the success of their work would look like in order to create a logic model
  - They also have to figure out what they expect each activity to accomplish, and how those results will add up over time to the change they want
  -

## 2b.TS1 What Is A Theory of Change and What Is A Logic Model?

- This can be particularly helpful to groups working on social equity, antiracism and inclusion goals - because it offers a way for the group to discuss different people's or racial/ethnic identify groups' assumptions about what constitutes success of their work, and to set reasonable expectations for the timing and depth of results. (See tip sheets for Stage 7)
- A logic model is also very helpful for evaluation, because once you have identified the results (outcomes) you expect from each activity, and what you expect to accomplish in the short, intermediate and long-run, you will know what to measure to see if you are making progress and if you are on track to the changes you want.

Thus, theories of change and logic models are both tools that help groups get clearer and clearer about what they are doing and how they expect what they are doing to make a difference.

They have many features in common:

- Both focus on outcomes - that is, in what you want to accomplish.
- Both should be grounded in your analysis of what it takes to create the change, and your understanding of why conditions are as they are now. That analysis should take into account power, privilege, oppression, racism and other factors.
- Both describe the strategies -- the sets of activities or programs -- that are being designed to address those factors and change the outcomes.
- Both depend on a set of assumptions about why these strategies should make a difference in the desired outcomes.
- Both are generally represented in the form of charts or graphs (not just text or words).

This website includes examples of theory of change pictures and logic models. It also includes tools, resources and links to websites with more information, including ways to develop your own theories of change and logic models.

- The examples illustrate how a logic model and a theory of change might help community groups identify the specific changes they expect to influence through their strategies and activities (see the logic model example) and the chain of influence they expect to put in place by these strategies and activities (see the theory of change example).

## 2b.TS1 What Is A Theory of Change and What Is A Logic Model?

- When a theory of change is developed for a strategy, one of its main benefits is helping identify expected results along the way to the hoped-for community change.
  - These may be called interim results or short-term outcomes.
  - The nature of your strategies, the degree of success in getting them implemented, and their reach will affect when interim results or short-term outcomes can reasonably be expected.
  - Since the community changes sought by most groups concerned with racism may take a number of years to realize in full, it is important to be able to measure interim results.
  - Measuring these results will help identify strategies that are not paying off as expected, are only benefiting some of the intended group, or use more resources than the benefits they produce.
  - Hopefully, there will also be positive interim results – successes that can be expanded or replicated, that help leverage additional support and resources, and that keep your group and its allies and constituencies motivated to stay the course.