

Theory of Change Workshop

Building Your Theory of Change: Facilitating Questions

Social Problem

- What is the issue in society that you are interested in?

- Why is this a problem?

- Who is affected by the problem? What are the implications for each actor group?

- Who is talking about this problem?

Purpose

- What is the primary purpose of your research project?

- What aspects of the social problem is your project aiming to address?

- What impacts do you aim to contribute to?

- How would your research contribute to addressing the problem?

Research Problem

- Why is research needed and important to deal with this problem?

- What research has already been done on this topic?

- What is the knowledge gap you aim to fill?

- What is your research question(s)?

- How can it be researched?

Disciplinary Orientation and Theoretical Framing

- How can you get the information you need to answer your research question(s)?

- How does theory help understand the problem?

- What disciplines are related to your research problem?

- What methods can you use to collect and analyze data to answer your research question(s)?

- How can you integrate or synthesize theories and methods in your research?

Target Audiences

- Having identified who is affected by the problem, who are the main stakeholders of your research project? (individuals, organizations; ‘beneficiaries’, users [e.g., decision-makers and policy-makers], boundary partners, co-researchers/partners)

- Which stakeholders can you engage in your research project? How do you plan to involve them?

- Are there potential partners you could involve in your research project? How? At what stage?

Research Activities

- What project activities will you plan? How will you carry these out?

- What tools do you plan to use?

- What engagement activities will you plan?

- Who do you plan to involve and/or engage in each activity? How?

- Are these activities feasible? What resources will you need to help carry them out?

- Are you equipped to carry out these activities? What knowledge do you need? What capacities do you need to build?

Outputs

- What will be the main outputs of your project?

- What will be the main knowledge contributions of your project?

- What services/‘social process’ contributions will result from your project?

- How will your planned research activities lead to these intended outputs?

Communication, Dissemination, and Knowledge Translation

- Who are the main intended users of your research findings? How would they benefit from your research?

- Who are the highest priority audiences? How can you access them?

- Are there any other stakeholders who would benefit from your research? (consider transferability)

- How do you plan to tailor, package, and share knowledge to different audiences?

- Based on your position, how can you influence change through your research?

Outcomes

- What knowledge will your research (co)create? How?

- What attitudes will your research influence? How?

- What skills will your research build? How?

- What relationships will your research build? How?

- Who will do what differently (behaviour) as a result of your research project? Why?

- At what level do these expected changes occur (individual, organizational; discourse, policy, practice)?

- How will your planned activities support the intended outcomes?

- Is it reasonable to expect that these changes will occur? Why?

- Do you anticipate any negative outcomes could result from your work? How could you mitigate these?

Impact Pathways

- What types of impact pathways do you intend to influence? (see list of examples)

- With what impact pathways do your intended outcomes align?

- Do your planned activities and intended outcomes logically connect through an impact pathway? How?

Indicators

For each key actor (actor group) and/or outcome:

- What would you expect to see result from your research?

- What would you like to see result from your research?

- What would you love to see result from your research?