



Theory of Change: Your actions and goals

Thinking back to the first half of the course, we may remember we discussed 'Theory of Change'. This concept links elements of an 'intervention' to the anticipated 'outputs' and 'outcomes'.

Creating a theory of change can help you to better understand what you are trying to achieve with your project and what targets it is realistic to set.

Identifying actions, outputs and outcomes

Thinking about one of the initiatives or projects that you are considering for your local community, fill in the last page of the document.

Actions

Actions in this content means the elements of your intervention that result in outputs and outcomes. An action can be 'Offering free repair services at a repair cafe' or 'Installing solar panels on the roof of the village hall'.

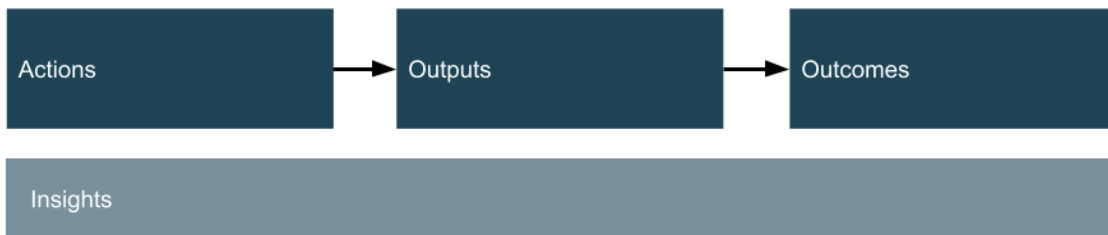
Outputs

Outputs are the direct results of your intervention. There can be multiple outputs per action. For example the output of a repair cafe can be 'Items repaired' and 'Number of local people attended'. Outputs of an installed solar panel are for example the energy created. Outputs are usually easily quantifiable.

Outcomes

Outcomes can be either environmental, social or other (e.g. economic or health-related) and are linked to the outputs of an action. For a repair cafe, you could identify environmental outcomes like 'items diverted from landfill' or 'carbon saved' to the output of 'items repaired'. Outcomes for the installed solar panels could of course be 'carbon saved' which are directly linked to 'energy created', but you could also define an outcome around 'awareness raised' by making solar panels more visible in the village. Outcomes can be harder to quantify than outputs. Social outcomes are often tracked via surveys and polls.

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Identifying goals

Once you have identified your actions, outputs and outcomes, it is usually straightforward to define goals for them. You should base your goals on research to ensure they are realistic. Insights into your local community and related case studies are helpful here. For a repair cafe, you would want to investigate the appetite for repairing services in your village and research how successful they have been in similar settings such as yours (i.e. how many items did they repair in other South Cambridgeshire villages?). You can use the information gathered to set some initial goals for your project.

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Actions		Outputs		Outcomes
E.g.: 'Offer free repair service'		- Items repaired		- Items diverted from waste - Production of new items avoided
		- Local people engaged		- Awareness raised