



ActKnowledge
Theory to Results

THEORY OF CHANGE ONLINE

Presentation Overview

- TOC Basics
- Issues with traditional methods
- TOC Online solutions
- When and Where to find it



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Theory to Results

Introduction to TOC Online

Theory Of Change

It is a systematic exploration of the links between activities, outcomes, and context.



Elements Of A Theory Of Change

A pathway of change that shows the connections between long term, intermediate and early outcomes

Statements that explain how the intervention fits along the pathway of change

Justifications that explain why the initiative expects change to occur



Theory of Change: Why Develop One?

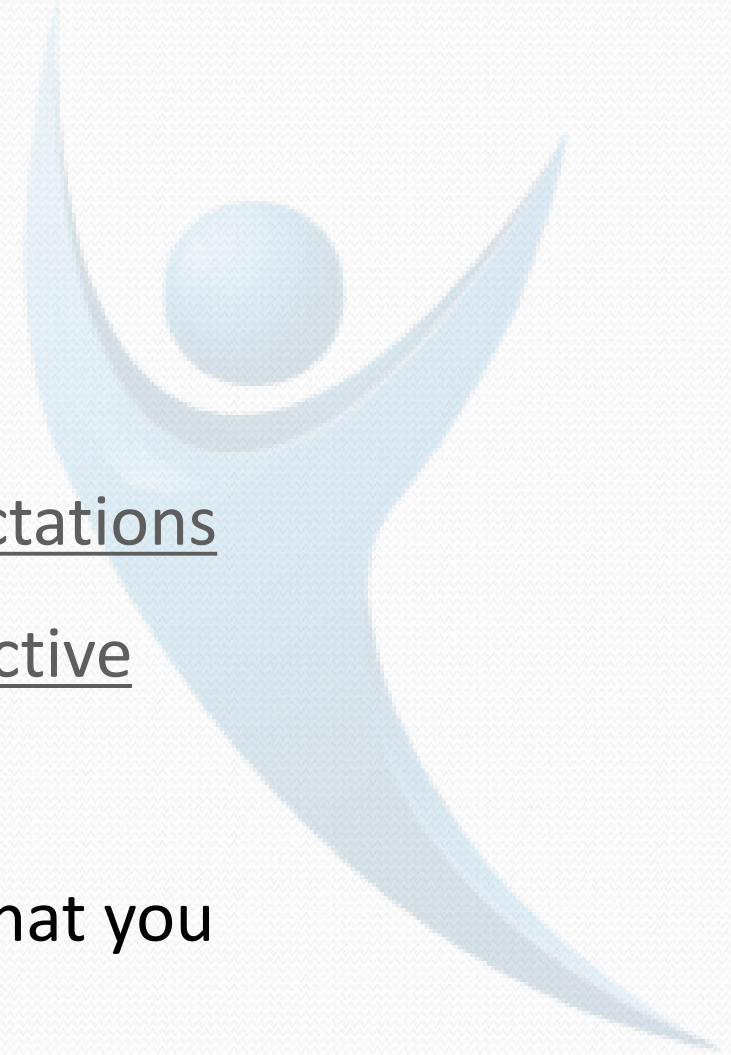
Participatory process

Creates realistic program expectations

Creates a safe place to be reflective

Can improve evaluation

Allows others to understand what you
are doing



Uses of Theory of Change

Decision-making: Whether to take on an activity or not

Alignment of program activities with goals

Communication of message

Evaluation



Other Advantages

Stakeholders are asked to be clear about their assumptions

Gaps between steps and outcomes become evident

Novel solutions may emerge

The initiative is more likely to be effective



And more...

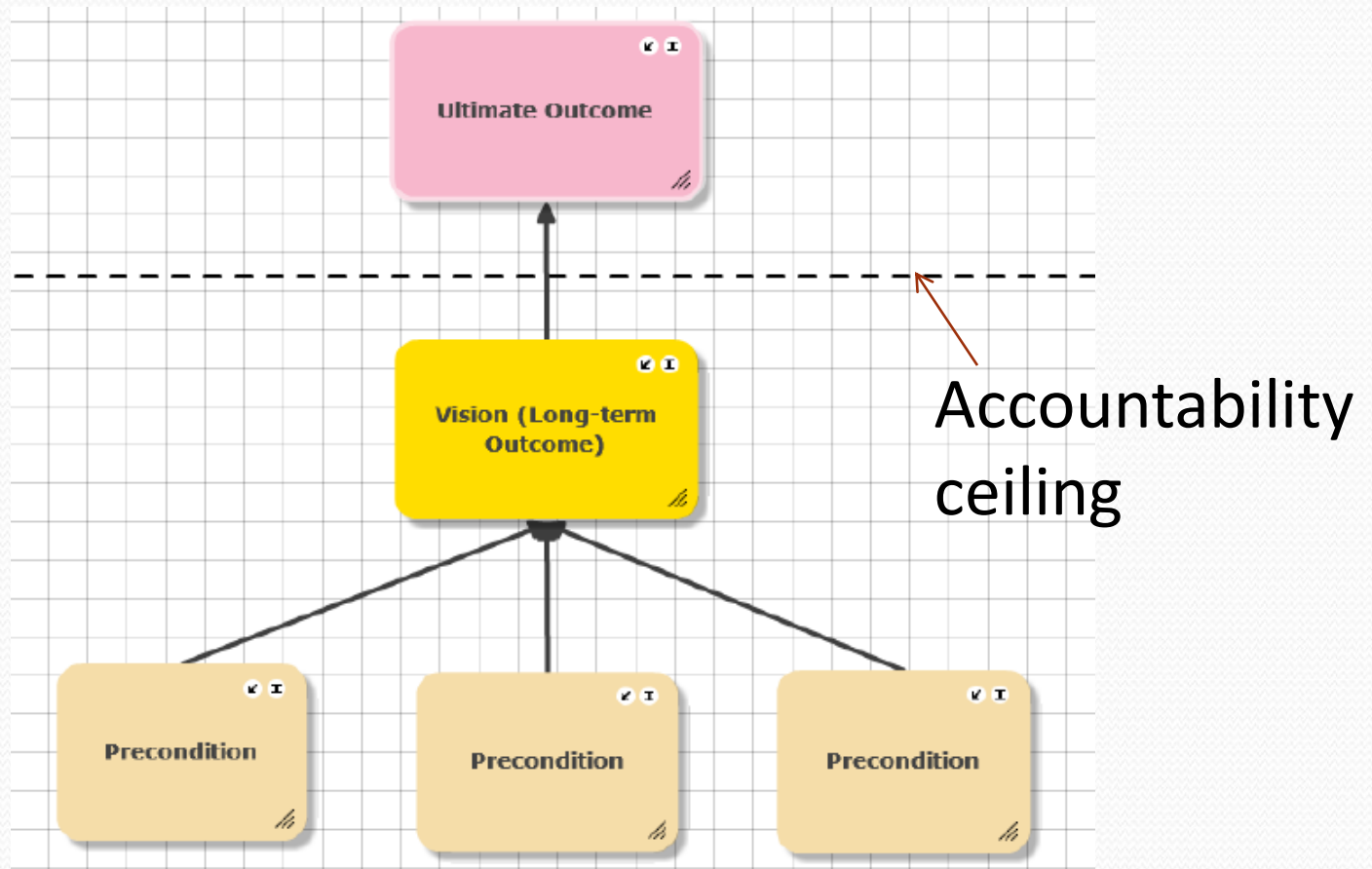
Evaluations based on a theory carry more weight

Evaluation plans and criteria are transparent to everyone

A broader base of knowledge is created

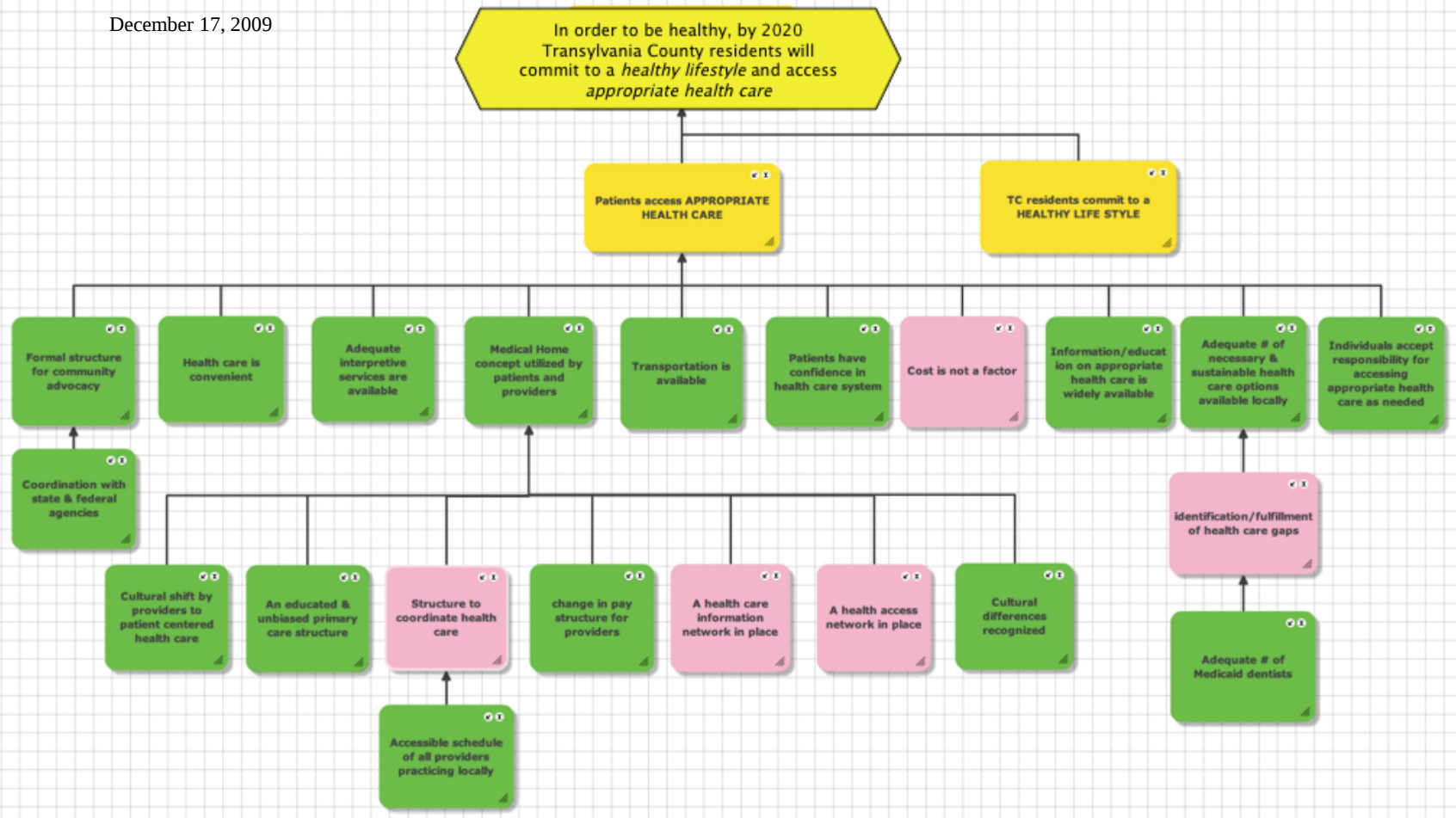


Visual Logic



Mapping a Causal Pathway

December 17, 2009



Issues with Traditional Method

Needs to be in electronic format for dissemination,
saving old versions, etc.

Continuous revision requires drawing software

Many pieces of information to store and organize

Difficult to get input from everyone who needs to have
say in theory construction



Theory of Change Online: A Tool

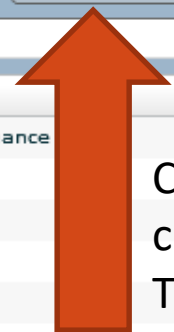
Theory of Change Online (TOCO) is a tool designed to address some of the issues with the Traditional Method.

- Create and edit TOC maps
- Storage and organization of information
- Maps can be shared



My TOCs: [Create a TOC](#)Search: **Title**

THP Micro Finance


Click here to
create a new
TOC Map☐ Show shared TOCs too

Welcome to Theory of Change Online (TOCO). This is the first web-based tool that you can use to draw and edit your theory of change, learn the concepts of theory of change, and solicit comments from your stakeholders.

The Theory of Change Online's purpose is to aid social change initiatives in creating, sharing and using their theories. You will find user guides, examples, and a highly graphical environment for building, editing, and soliciting feedback on a theory of change. Use of TOCO is FREE. Custom design, training and review will be available from ActKnowledge at affordable costs depending on the size of the organization.

Initially funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation in 2004, TOCO has been in development for five years, and represents our best thinking and lessons in the field.

Using TOC online should make the labor-intensive part of developing and evolving your theory much, much easier than our current techniques of drawing and redrawing and distributing each version. All of your data - outcomes, indicators, rationales, assumptions and interventions will be stored in the TOC online database - and be completely confidential to you and any colleagues you designate. You can chose to either share your TOC with all other users or make it accessible only with your own id. In the next version, sharing within an organization will be added.



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My TOCs: [Create a TOC](#)Search:

Title

THP Micro Finance Project

☐ Show shared TOCs too

Create a New Toc



Enter the following information to create a new TOC

Title

☐ Share this TOC?[Create it!](#)

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100%

Shared? ☐

Example

Create a Long Term Outcome

Start by creating your long-term outcome here:

Add Outcome

Outcome Editor

Basics

Indicators

Title:

Description:

Color:

Done



100%

Shared? ☐

Example

 
Ultimate Outcome 

Outcome Editor

Basics

Indicators

1

In Progress

What Will Change?:

Who?:

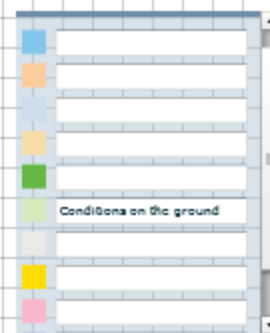
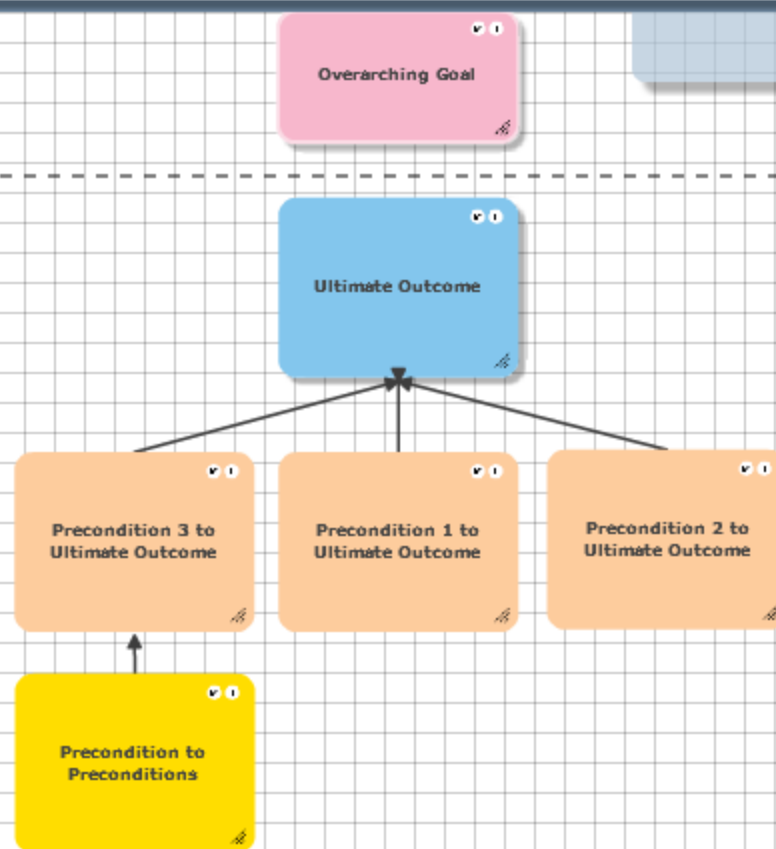
How Many?:

How Much?:

Done

Ultimate Outcome

Precondition 1 to
Ultimate Outcome



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The Community is gathering.

Register for Theory of Change Community

Enhanced Theory of Change Website

Our community website is on the way, with all the familiar content from theoryofchange.org plus new community features. Here are just a few of them:

Members Files

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[Completing Framework] [Indicators] [Interventions] [Narrative]

Stage 1: Identifying Outcomes and assumptions

In the first stage of theory development, TOC participants discuss, agree on, and get specific about, the long-term goal or goals. This can be done in a variety of ways, (see our facilitator's guide), but the important thing is to set a good, clear outcome. The quality of the rest of the theory hinges on doing this right!

Then, TOC participants start to design a simple map of the preconditions required to bring about the long-term goal. Beginning the mapping process helps stakeholders to visualize and prioritize their goals as well as specify what they expect to change and for which outcomes they want to be held accountable.

Stage 1: Identifying Goals and Outcomes

```

graph TD
    A((A)) --- B[Long-Term Employment at Livable Wage for Domestic Violence Survivors]
    C((C)) --> B
    D((D)) --> B
    E[Survivors know and have appropriate workplace behavior] --> B
    B --- F[Survivors attain coping skills]
    B --- G[Survivors have marketable skills in non-traditional jobs]
    B --- H[Survivors know and have appropriate workplace behavior]
  
```

The flowchart illustrates the relationship between Long-Term Employment at Livable Wage for Domestic Violence Survivors and three factors. The central box is labeled 'Long-Term Employment at Livable Wage for Domestic Violence Survivors'. Three boxes point to this central box: 'Survivors attain coping skills' (labeled C), 'Survivors have marketable skills in non-traditional jobs' (labeled D), and 'Survivors know and have appropriate workplace behavior'. The central box is also connected to three boxes: 'Survivors attain coping skills', 'Survivors have marketable skills in non-traditional jobs', and 'Survivors know and have appropriate workplace behavior'.

Commentary

For this example, the long-term outcome is the long-term employment of domestic violence survivors at a livable wage. To achieve that goal, the program designers identify three preconditions: survivors attain

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Guides

Depending upon both your familiarity with Theory of Change and the complexity of your initiative, there may be additional advanced topics worth exploring.

- Scope: How Much Should a Good Theory Account For?** (130 kb, PDF file) A key question that comes up when undertaking a theory of change, is how much can, or should, the theory account for? Should it account for factors that are beyond the control of the program? Should it account for how each outcome is brought about? This article builds on the premise that how far the theory should go depends on the purpose of the theory and the availability of resources to pursue it. Therefore, one must know what they want the theory to explain and how they want to use it, to determine the appropriate scope. The scopes in increasing order detail: narrow and shallow, broad and shallow, narrow and deep, broad and deep.
- Making Sense: Reviewing Program Design with Theory of Change** (96 kb, PDF file) This article considers the value and pitfalls of Theory of Change as a tool for evaluating program design. Because the Theory of Change approach carefully scrutinizes program design it can unearth both positives and negatives about a program to its stakeholders.
- Tips and Challenges on Team Building with Theory of Change** (114 kb, PDF file) Many individuals are interested in Theory of Change as a tool for teambuilding. In this article, we explain why Theory of Change's participatory process is a great complement but not a substitute or tool for teambuilding.

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