Think (Evaluatively) Outside of the Box: Theory of Change Pathway Models to Tell the Story of the Broader Impacts of Your Work

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9:00am – 11:30am
goals
The **goal** of this workshop is to help you...

- To **learn** and **practice** how to use ‘pathway models’ to articulate a program’s theory of change, and
- To **prepare to use** pathway models to guide evaluation and storytelling about the broader impact of the work of the 1994 Land-Grant Institutions.
goals

A pathway model can help you:

- refine and formalize your program’s *theory of change*
- focus on *outcomes* and *impacts* rather than just activities and outputs
- *identify* and *prioritize* areas in need of more program planning and evaluation
- take a *systems perspective* on your work
- *tell the story* of the *broader impacts* of your work
- articulate a *shared holistic vision* of the path forward
greetings & introductions

Please share:
1. Your name & affiliation
2. Your area of work
3. A brief success story from your work, when you knew your programs were making a positive impact
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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| 9:00-9:15    | • Greetings and introductions  
• Overview of the session’s objective and activities |
| 9:15-10:00   | • Storytelling outside the box  
• Evaluative thinking  
• Brief introduction to:  
  o Theory of change models  
  o Boundary analysis  
  o Stakeholder analysis  
  o Pathway models |
| 10:00-11:00  | • Applied practice session in small groups to practice developing a pathway model  
• Gallery walk to observe and reflect on peers’ models |
| 11:00-11:30  | • Harvesting action points from the model  
• Planning for continued use of the model and next steps  
• Conclusion |
perspective
perspective
impact

Image credit: Davide Restivo, creative commons
impact
"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."
“Dear Mr. Gandhi, We regret we cannot fund your proposal because the link between spinning cloth and the fall of the British Empire was not clear to us.”

(Rogers et al., 2006)
Varieties and components of logic models

- Graphic display of boxes and arrows; vertical or horizontal
  - Relationships, linkages
- Any shape possible
  - Circular, dynamic
  - Cultural adaptations; storyboards
- Level of detail
  - Simple
  - Complex
- Multiple models
  - Multi-level programs
  - Multi-component programs

(University of Wisconsin Extension, n.d.)
# Logic Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logic Model</th>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Participants/Audience</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
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**Assumptions:**

**External Factors:**

(University of Wisconsin Extension, n.d.)
Theories of Change

Time for a radical approach to learning in development

Craig Valters
The Theory of Change approach, with its focus on continuous critical reflection, demands a radical shift towards more and better learning in development thinking and practice. No new tool or approach can in itself address problems of institutional incentives in the sector that block such learning. However, a Theory of Change approach may be able to create a productive (albeit small) space for critical reflection — in this industry a challenging and much-needed aim.
The Theory of Change Approach

A Theory of Change is an ongoing process of reflection to explore change and how it happens – and what that means for the part we play in a particular context, sector and/or group of people. (James, 2011)
A pathway model is a type of logic model that serves as a theory of change diagram. It is a graphical representation of the relationships between the activities, outputs and outcomes that make up a program. Pathway models communicate the "story" of a program. They can also be used to inform the scope and questions that guide the evaluation of the program being modeled.
Pathways: 4-H Science Toolkit Capacity Building

Diagram

Pathways Diagram

Legend
- Activity
- Output
- Short-Term Outcome
- Medium-Term Outcome
- Long-Term Outcome

Promote the project; list serves, websites, newsletters, workshops, conferences

Papers, posters, presentations

Project promotional materials

Complete, refine, and make available Science Toolkits

Completed Science Toolkit (aligned with NYS)
Peer Review & Harvesting Your Model
Peer Review & Harvesting Your Model
some considerations while creating pathway models
level of magnification and zoom
Boundary Analysis

This is my home.

This is my home.

This is my home.

And so is this.
Boundary Analysis

Comprehensive program to raise awareness of threats to VA agriculture

Programming on invasive species affecting vegetable crops in VA

Workshop series for farmers facing a particular invasive species

The 3-hour Pest Identification Workshop offered to growers in region X
Boundary Analysis

1. What is the essence of this program? (activities and outcomes) What is not?

2. Who are the participants? Who are not?

3. How is the program being delivered, and is that an essential part of the program?

4. How much of the possible span of activities have to be included in order to have a full view of this program?

5. How much of the possible span of outcomes have to be included in order to get a full view of this program?

6. What scale and scope are correct?
Stakeholder Analysis
Stakeholder Analysis
front & back of the house
time-frame
introduction to evaluative thinking
introduction to evaluative thinking

(Patton, 2008)
Evaluative Thinking (ET):

Evaluative thinking is critical thinking applied in the context of evaluation, motivated by an attitude of inquisitiveness and a belief in the value of evidence, that involves:

1. identifying assumptions,
2. posing thoughtful questions,
3. pursuing deeper understanding through reflection and multiple perspective taking,
4. and making informed decisions in preparation for action.

(Buckley, Archibald, Hargraves, & Trochim, 2015)
Types of Assumptions

• **causal**: about how different parts of the world work and about the conditions under which these can be changed.
  - How will program outputs turn into intended outcomes? e.g., *If we do X, then Y will result.*

• **prescriptive**: about what we think ought to or should be happening in a particular situation.
  - What is the most appropriate program/policy strategy alternative? e.g., *All projects must have a gender component.*
Types of Assumptions

- **paradigmatic**: deeply held foundational beliefs about the world, like a worldview.
  - What implicit perspectives or theories of knowledge and of reality guide your work? What global geopolitical and cultural trends affect your thinking without you usually being aware of it? e.g., *Scientific knowledge is fundamentally better than indigenous knowledge.*

Brookfield (2012)
1994 land grant institution pathways
Directions for Today

• Form groups

• Brainstorm: Activities and Outcomes (short-, medium-, and long-term) using Blank Logic Model Template and colored sticky notes
  ▪ Consider boundary analysis
  ▪ Consider stakeholders’ multiple perspectives

• Configure your Activities and Outcomes on a large paper, using a pencil to draw arrows between them

• Do peer review on others’ models to foster evaluative thinking
• **ACTIVITIES** are the active components of a program. They are conducted or implemented by program staff, and directly reach the program participants and/or target audience. Examples of activities include: workshops, online forums, and presentations.

• **OUTPUTS** are tangible products that are created as a result of completing an activity. They are different from outcomes, which are often less tangible effects on participants.

• **SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES** are effects on program participants that are logically and directly connected with program activities. For example, short-term outcomes may describe effects on participants' awareness, attitudes, skills or motivations.

• **MID (or MEDIUM)-TERM OUTCOMES** are effects on program participants that logically and directly arise after short-term outcomes and activities. For example, mid-term outcomes may describe effects on participants' behavior, decision making or social action.

• **LONG-TERM OUTCOMES** are effects on program participants, their communities or society that arise logically from mid-term outcomes. Long-term outcomes may describe aggregate effects, changes in policy, and other longitudinal impacts.

(Cornell Office for Research on Evaluation, 2010)
Peer Review & Harvesting Your Model

• Visit a peer group’s model and use the dot stickers to identify:
  - **Good ideas.** These might be particularly good or novel outcomes, good links, whatever deserves recognition.
  - **Confusing areas.** This could be unclear outcome language or an area of the model that wouldn't make sense to an outsider.
  - **Big leaps of logic.** This would be for an arrow that covers too much ground and contains too many buried assumptions.
  - **Errors in the model.** If the model has “broken the rules” (dead ends, unconnected elements, leapfrogging of elements, etc.)
At the logic model repair shop ...

So, I'm guessing this is for a comprehensive program-level intervention
Logic Model Tip: Models do not need to be drawn to scale

Now if you'll follow me into the next room, we'll take a look at some of the long term outcomes
Hi, I donated $20 last year. Can you tell me exactly how many Children I've saved?
Thank you!

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