

The Change Toolkit

Chapter 3. Planning your work

Before you embark on a broad or long-term endeavour to improve the law and prevent future injustice, it is a good idea to have a plan to structure your transformation efforts. This chapter introduces the notion of a ‘theory of change’ and explains how to prepare one.

What is a theory of change?

In broad terms, a **theory of change** offers a ‘road map’ that illustrates the steps you will take to bring about the change you hope to accomplish.¹ It presents a clear picture of the difference you seek to make and how you plan to do it.

Theories of change can vary dramatically in terms of complexity. This depends on the size and structure of the project. A discrete task (for instance, contacting the Attorney-General to address unforeseen gaps in the laws applying to missing persons, as outlined below) will be guided by a clear-cut and easy to follow linear theory. Alternatively, a more ambitious and long-term project will need a theory that incorporates multiple layers of detail and explores the interrelations among your planned activities and intended results.

Every theory of change will look different, because each one reflects the context, needs and views of a particular community.

¹ The term ‘theory of change’ also describes a specific causal model of how project activities contribute to intended outcomes. For more information about this model, see <<http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/evaluation-methodology/an-introduction-to-theory-of-change>>. For the purposes of this chapter, we use the label ‘theory of change’ in a broad sense and focus on a particular theory called the ‘logic model’. Here, the terms ‘theory of change’ and ‘logic model’ are used interchangeably.

Why is it important to have one?

First, creating a theory of change enhances your project **design** and **planning**. You can use it to:

- map your strategies and activities;
- clarify the scope and steps of your project; and explore how your planned work will lead to the outcomes you want.

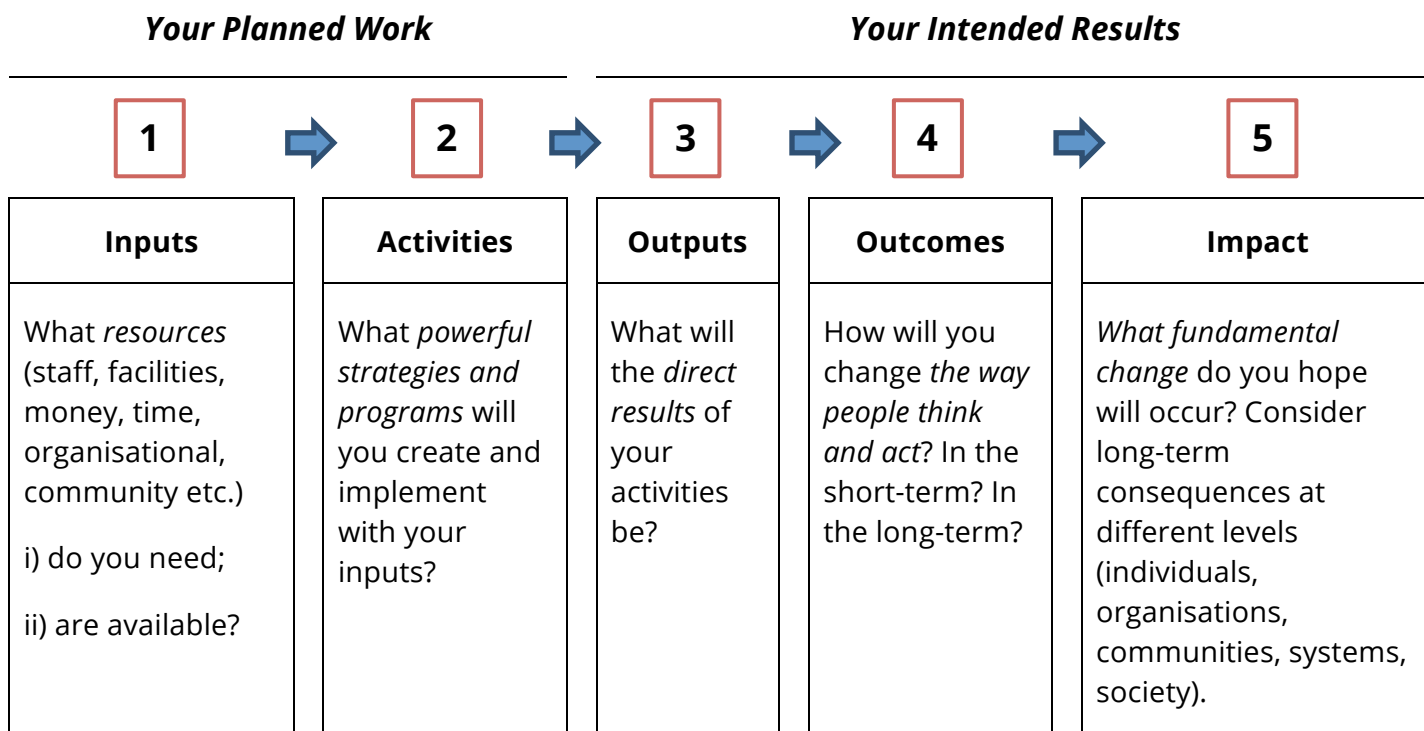
Doing this will add a reasoned and realistic structure to your work.

Second, preparing a theory of change assists with project **implementation**. It is a practical way to visually represent a pathway of change and encapsulate key indicators of progress to guide you. Without one, you risk losing direction.

Third, a theory of change is a valuable tool for **seeking funding**. Your theory of change will convey your methodology and expected outcomes. It will provide potential funders with a clear, visual model of what you intend to do and why. This will strengthen the case for investing in your project.

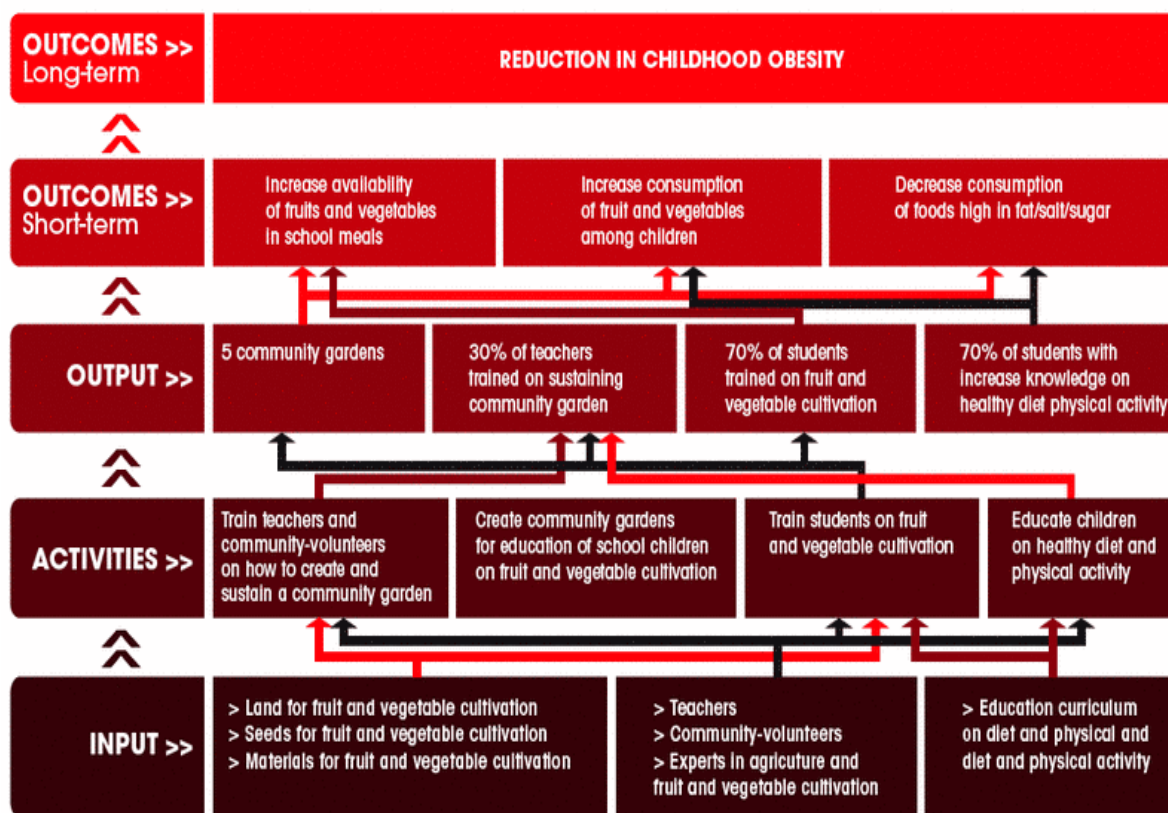
Fourth, a theory of change facilitates project **evaluation**. It outlines and communicates the work you plan to do in order to produce the desired outcomes and impact. In this sense, a theory of change sets benchmarks that you or others can use to monitor and assess your successes along the way, and identifies the obstacles to overcome.

What does a basic theory of change look like?²



Some examples

Reducing Childhood Obesity, World Heart Federation³



² This is an example of a basic logic model. It is drawn from W K Kellogg Foundation, *Logic Model Development Guide* (1998), <https://www.aacu.org/bringing_theory/documents/LogicModel.pdf>.

³ This example is drawn from the World Heart Foundation's website. It is available at: <http://www.world-heart-federation.org/what-we-do/awareness/kids-on-the-move-toolkit/1-planning/writing-the-plan/logic-model/>.

Missing Persons Laws, Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre

“This is the legal system working at its best to correct an anomaly within the system and to better protect and serve the people of Victoria. Our legal system has been enriched by the scrutiny and questioning this case has prompted, and while the victory is no substitute for a family still looking for a loved one, and for answers, it should at least ease some of their pain.”⁴

After their adult son went missing in 2009, David and Julie Rosewall faced a number of hurdles when trying to manage his legal and financial affairs. They couldn't get his mail redirected, access the funds in his bank account, have an exception made for his failure to vote, deal with creditors or utility providers or resolve his lease lawfully.

At the time, there were no provisions in Victorian legislation enabling a next of kin or family member to act on behalf of a missing person where the missing person had not appointed a financial power of attorney. The Rosewalls approached various government agencies and sought advice from a vast range of legal service providers, but were told they could not be assisted. They were desperate, emotionally distraught and frustrated with the constant 'stonewalling' at every turn.

The Rosewalls approached Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre (LCCLC) in 2010. Unable to assist the Rosewalls within the current confines of the law, LCCLC decided to take on the matter as a law reform project to assist the Rosewalls and others who found themselves in a similar situation.

LCCLC prepared a submission to the Law Reform Commission, undertook a media

campaign and wrote to the then Attorney-General, Rob Hulls. Within weeks, the Attorney-General referred the matter to the Department of Justice who prepared legislation to amend the existing guardianship and administration legislation to enable the effective protection and administration of the affairs of missing persons.

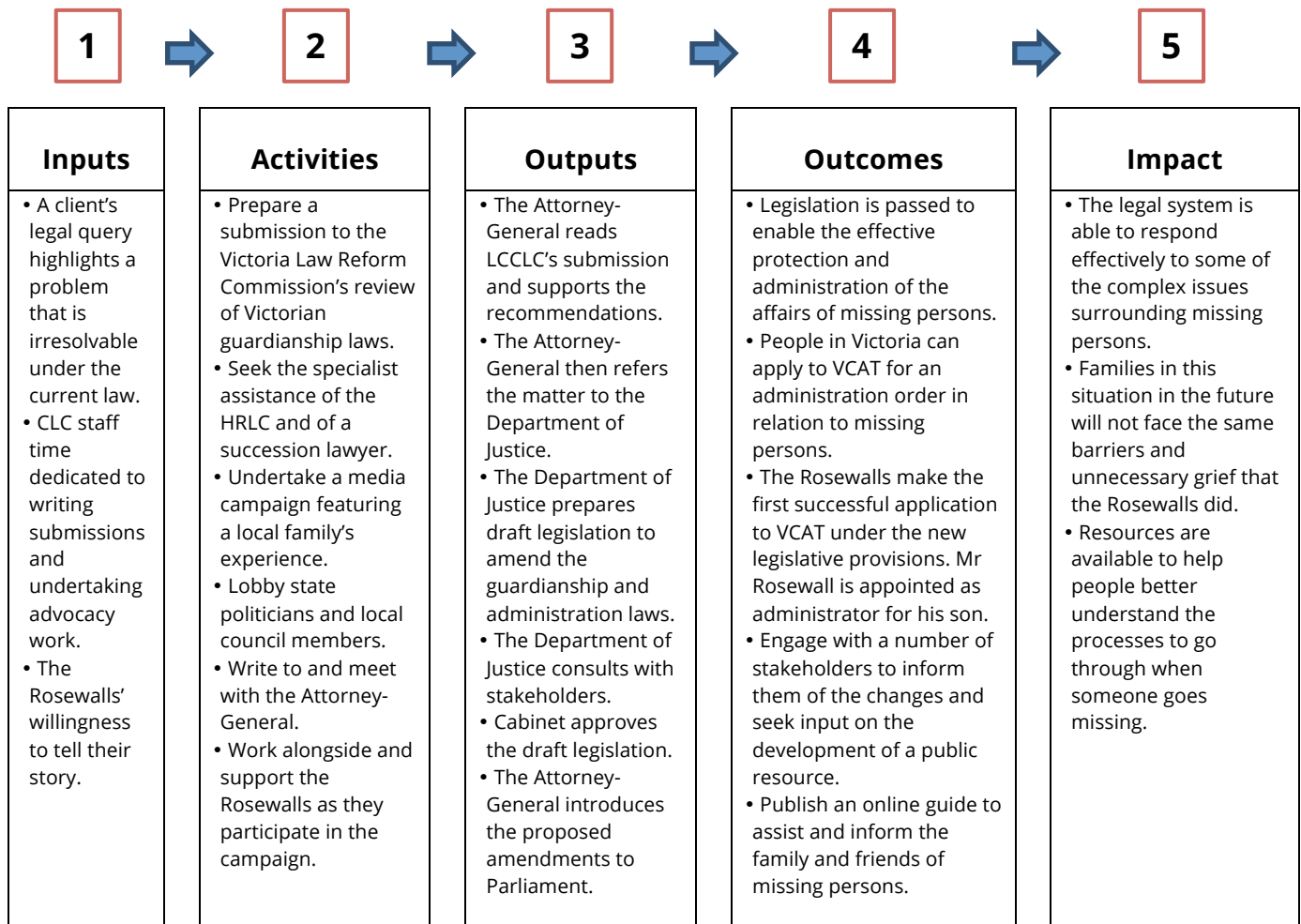
The legislation passed in 2010 with bi-partisan support. As a result, David Rosewall was able to ensure that his son's affairs were kept in order, including the payment of debts, completion of tax returns and redirection of mail. Families in this situation in future will not face the same barriers the Rosewalls had to encounter.

⁴ Editorial, Bendigo Advertiser, 13 November 2010.

The following logic model is one way to represent the pathway to legislative change in this case.

LCCLC's Planned Work

LCCLC's Intended Results



Acknowledgments

This chapter has been downloaded from <http://www.thechangetoolkit.org.au>. We recommend checking back to see if the content has been updated.

The Change Toolkit was prepared by the Federation of Community Legal Centres. The Federation is the peak body for community legal centres across Victoria.

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