Theory of Change: A Step-by-Step Cheat Sheet

1 DEFINE THE PROBLEM

- **What is the issue?** Clearly identify the problem that needs to be solved by the programme.
- **Why does it exist?** Understand the root causes of the problem.
- **Who is affected?** Define the target group and how many are impacted.
- **By how much are they affected?** Quantify the problem and the needs, with evidence and data to back this up.
- **Provide evidence**: you should have a needs assessment to back up your understanding of the problem with clear data, and to verify your understanding is accurate from the perspective of those who experience the problem.
- **Example:** Youth unemployment in a small town due to lack of skills and opportunities.

2 SET THE END GOAL (IMPACT AND OUTCOMES)

- **What change do you want to see?** Define the long-term impact you aim to create.
- **Break it down into smaller steps or intermediate outcomes:** These are the specific changes (in behaviours, attitudes, beliefs) that will occur for the people or communities served by your efforts to solve the problem
- **Example:** increased income for youth, increased self-confidence of youth.

Each programme should have a Theory of Change, and then these roll up into a broader organisational Theory of Change. For the organisational Theory of Change, your activities are your core programmes and services

3 OUTLINE ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

- List **key actions** required to achieve the desired outcomes- key aspects of the core programme or service
- **Example:** provide training and mentorship, arrange internships, provide stipends,
- Identify i**mmediate outputs**: add target numbers of activities delivered and people served (10 youth mentored, 10 mentor sessions, 4 trainings, 10 internship placements)

4 CHANGE MECHANISMS: ASSUMPTIONS AND CAUSAL LINKS

- **"If-then" logic:** What assumptions does your logic make (e.g., if youth receive training, then they will find jobs).
- **Causal Links:** the social science research that underpins your assumptions and programme logic (youth risk and resilience research)

5 DEVELOP A VISUAL THEORY OF CHANGE

- **Map the process:** Create a visual or table that links your problem, activities, outcomes, and impact
- **Use it regularly:** Use it to communicate with stakeholders and use it to guide evaluation processes

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