**Theory of change, theory of action and logframe matrix**

# First some terminology !

This is important as two narratives have developed – first the logframe one and now the intervention logic one - which complement each other – but unfortunately have succeeded in confusing many people !

* The ‘logframe matrix’ sets out what the ‘action’ will do and how it will be monitored. Seen from the perspective of ‘intervention logic’ this LFM represents what is often referred to as ‘theory of action.’
* ‘Intervention logic’ comprises – a ‘theory of action’ (LFM) and a ‘theory of change’. The theory of change makes explicit the change processes in an action, the assumptions on which we think (hypothesize) that the action will unfold, and our assessment of the reliability of these assumptions (evidence).

# How does the ‘theory of change’ position itself in relation to the LFM ‘theory of action’ ?

The theory of change *complements* the theory of action – they are two elements of an overall logical approach. Both are now considered as essential elements to include in planning as they are necessary for effective management of an action, and its evaluation. The theory of change provides greater understanding/insights into why change is happening the way it is, and therefore adds value by enabling better management of the whole action.

# What are the similarities and what are the differences between theory of action and theory of change ?

***Similarities*** – just as in developing an LFM (theory of action), the theory of change/IL is a facilitated and iterative process with key stakeholders.

***Differences*** – whereas the theory of action is represented in an LFM which is a standardised format, the theory of change (ToC) has no standardised format. Its product is a short narrative which:

* indicates the rationale for the choice of action made
* provides the pathway of change for the overall action, and for each step in the chain
* provides the assumptions for why we hypothesize that change will happen in this way
* provides evidence which underpin these assumptions

***Added value*** – ToC added value is greater for the understanding of change dynamics, which in turn helps us to manage the action better.

# How do we work on theory of action and theory of change ?

A diagram which accompanies the narrative and illustrates the core logic is very helpful, however not mandatory.

***Different starting points :***

* LFM when developed without a comprehensive LFA (logical framework approach) starts with thinking through context of the action and quickly narrows to focus on the objective of the action and then what needs to be done to achieve the goals of the action.
* The IL starts with thinking through the context of the issue (ie discussion is not related to a particular action) and works more gradually towards generating options for action, choosing the most appropriate one, and then developing this into a specific action, making explicit the change processes involved along the steps of the action

***Similarities :***

* Both require updating on a regular basis, and the various versions need to be stored for future reference in reviews and evaluations

***Summary box*** of the key differences in focus and emphasis of the two elements of the logical approach

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| **Intervention Logic/**  **Theory of change** | **LogFrame matrix (developed without a comprehensive LFA)/ Theory of action** |
| * *Starts by establishing changes sought within wider context and then develops pathway to realize these changes (consideration is not related to the frame of a specific action)* | * *Starts by establishing context and objective of an action, then what to do to realize that action (considers context and all aspects already within the frame of a specific action)* |
| * *Process generates possible options for action, from which one action will be chosen* | * *Focuses only on the chosen action* |
| * *Indicates the overall change/transformation processes envisaged for the action, and at each step* | * *Provides indicators/milestones for monitoring progress for a specific action* |
| * *Emphasizes assumptions about change processes needed to make action happen, overall and* ***at each step*** *from inputs through to impact. Shows evidence (or lack of) for change processes* | * *Emphasizes assumptions, and risks for overall action at each step* |
| * ***Assumptions provided for change processes****, can convert into hypotheses for testing in evaluation* | * ***Assumptions provided for results along the chain*** *can convert into hypothesis for testing in monitoring* |
| * *Primarily* ***used to understand why things are happening the way they do****/have happened the way they have* | * *Primarily* ***used as a basis for monitoring what progress/results have been achieved*** |
| * *Follows no standardised presentation format* | * *Follows prescribed presentation format* |