

# Guide for the development and use of the Theory of Change (ToC)

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Result of the Theory of Change training in 2019

Translated from the original Dutch version

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This guide on the “Theory of Change” (TOC) was developed after and on the basis of a learning pathway organised by ACODEV, ngo-federatie and Fiabel for the actors of non-governmental cooperation (ANGCs). This learning pathway was supervised by HIVA-KU Leuven and ACE Europe between June and November 2019. These training courses and workshops were the basis and source of inspiration for this document, which aims to be more than just an account of the learning pathway. It also aims to be a useful tool for those who did not participate. A word of thanks goes out to the participants of the learning pathway for sharing their experiences. This guide is not finished: new experiences and training can be added to this document later.

In addition to the learning pathway itself, the authors’ main source of inspiration for this document is HIVOS’ ToC Guide (HIVOS, 2015) and the authors’ experiences with evaluations and guiding organisations in developing a ToC.

### 1.1. Who is this guide intended for?

This document has been written for employees of ANGCs who either or not participated in the learning pathway, and who would like to start working with a ToC. During the learning pathway, it became clear that there is little distinction in the use of the ToC between ANGCs who work in partner countries and ANGCs who (also) work on global citizenship education, movement work and policy influencing. The contents of this document **can therefore be used by staff who follow up programmes in both the partner countries and in Belgium**. The document contains examples of both types of interventions. Both ToC beginners and more advanced users can benefit from the content.

This guide is for organisations:

- wanting to become stronger in **planning relevant interventions** (for various donors);
- wanting to be better able to follow up social change processes;
- wanting to gain more **insight into how social change is taking place**;
- wanting to become better at naming and **demonstrating the contribution of their intervention to change**;
- wanting to use relevant hypotheses about change and contribution to change for critical self-reflection purposes.

Based on the 2019 training modules, this document provides elements and tools to understand the functions and added value of a ToC, to learn how to develop and use a ToC in planning, monitoring and evaluation. The document will support ANGCs who want to work on the ToC. Readers will be given tools:

- **to pay more attention to actors of change** and their expedient and necessary process of change;
- to identify changes and an appropriate strategy;
- **to understand the difference between a ToC and a logical framework**.
- to convert a ToC into a logical framework (as a tool for programme formulation and management);
- to use a ToC to formulate a coherent logical framework with **relevant indicators**;
- to use a ToC to **sharpen the focus of monitoring and evaluation**.

## 1.2. How to use this document

This guide can be used to prepare a process or a workshop aimed at formulating a ToC and also enables staff and partners to critically assess an existing ToC. This is not a traditional step-by-step guide: the document mainly aims to clarify the **underlying ideas of the ToC**. In the literature list you will find references to websites with background and step-by-step guidelines. A TOC especially invites ANGCS to create space for a **different way of thinking**.

This guide is just one of the documents developed during the learning pathway. For each training, a PowerPoint presentation and exercises were developed. The table below gives an overview of the material that is available on the federations' websites.

Training	Material
Basic training	PPT (only in FR)
Workshop critical reading of a ToC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- PPT</li><li>- Word document: first aid for the critical reading of a ToC, see Annex 6.2)</li></ul>
Training 'Using a ToC' for planning, development of a logical framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- PPT</li><li>- Word document Format Outcome Harvesting (only in NL)</li><li>- Suggestions for evaluation questions inspired by a ToC approach, see Annex 6.5.</li></ul>

## 1.3. What information will you not find in this document?

This document focuses on the ToC and identifies its potential regarding the more realistic formulation of programmes and more effective monitoring and evaluation. In particular, the aim is to support the ANGCS in the use of a ToC. However, the document does not go into detail about Result-Oriented Management, Project Cycle Management, formulating a good logical framework, analysing risks, setting up an M&E system, developing, choosing and applying tools for data collection and specific forms of evaluation, like for example impact assessment or contribution analysis.

## 2. TOC: WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

This chapter will discuss the definition, functions and key concepts, as well as the added value of the ToC, e.g. in comparison to a logical framework.

### 2.1. What is a ToC?

#### THEORIES OF CHANGE

Theories of change are “***the ideas and hypotheses (‘theories’) that people and organisations have about how change takes place***”. These theories can be conscious or unconscious and are based on personal beliefs, assumptions and a necessarily limited, personal perception of reality. As an approach, the ToC is a ***‘guiding framework for all stages of thinking, acting and giving meaning when ANGCS consciously intervene in social change processes’***. (HIVOS, 2015)

Another, frequently used definition is that of Rogers (2014), which focuses on expounding what is implicitly assumed about change and contribution to change: “Every programme is packed with beliefs, assumptions and hypotheses about how change happens – about the way humans work, or organisations, or political systems, or eco-systems. Theory of change is about articulating these many underlying assumptions about how change will happen in a programme.”

The ToC is both a process and a product:

**A process** - The ToC is a process of continuous questioning about how change can occur, what is happening and how and what plays a role in it. A ToC forces the ANGCS to ask certain questions. These specific questions play a role during the formulation of a ToC and during the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a project. **It’s all about asking the right questions.**

**A product** - The ToC is a product. The product shows how the ANGCS has thought about change and change processes at a certain point in time. It is a **snapshot** expressed in a schematic representation and/or a narrative. This forms a basis for the formulation and planning of a programme, e.g. by means of a logical framework. Both the narrative and the schematic representation have their importance: a diagram can give a quick insight; the narrative allows for more detailed information and explanations. In this guide we choose **not to list models or rules for the ‘best’ ToC** because this might give the idea that there is such a thing as the perfect ToC. **What we do is provide tools to structure the analysis and your own thinking process.**

## 2.2. The functions of a ToC

The ToC has **several functions**: it is an analysis and planning tool as well as a tool to make changes more explicit.

**An analysis and planning tool** - Based on insight in the factors and actors of a specific context (theme, country or region), a ToC allows for further analysis and reflection: (i) what is a **necessary and expedient concrete ultimate change** in a specific context (the so-called 'ultimate change statement'), (ii) which **actors** play a role in this, how should they change and how do these actors influence each other (actor approach), (iii) **how the paths of change could go** (the so-called 'pathways of change'), (iv) where and in what way the ANGC could best intervene (initiate, support, facilitate, implement, ...), alone or together with others (strategic interventions).

**A tool for expressing assumptions about change and contributions to change** - The ToC challenges to expound why an ANGC believes that a change will occur according to the path the ANGC imagines and why its contribution may have an impact. This is done by identifying **hypotheses** about relationships between changes, hypotheses about the contribution of interventions to change and about external factors and actors and their (positive or negative) influence on change.

It is important to see the ToC as a **'work in progress'**, an invitation to - time and again - position the ANGC and its interventions in relation to change processes. However, it is a reference document that itself changes according to time and context.

## 2.3. The ToC and thinking about complexity

Working with a theory of change is not new. However, more attention is now paid to supporting programme proposals with a ToC, certainly among donors. In many cases, donors – and also DGD – also still expect a logical framework (or another diagram) which clearly represents the intervention of the ANGC and the expected results (outputs and outcomes) in a linear intervention logic. In these cases, a **ToC can support the intervention logic and make it more robust and credible**.

The ToC must be seen in the context of thinking about systems and the complexity of social change and the corresponding responsibility of various actors. The traditional logical framework did not allow enough account to be taken of the complexity of social change. As a result, organisations looked for **approaches that were better able to capture that complexity** and integrate it into the preparation and formulation of new programmes.

**Social change** aimed at improving the living conditions of population groups/groups in precarious situations is essentially the **responsibility of social actors**: individuals, social groups, institutions or organisations. It is they who (should/can) make changes possible by **changing their attitudes, decisions, visions, power relations, policies, actions and practices**. The ANGCs strive to support them in this.

Processes of social change are referred to as 'complex' for various reasons:

- It is **difficult to see the link between cause and effect**. When it comes to social change, it is very difficult to determine, let alone predict with certainty, which factors (actions, strategies, actors) will generate which effects (type of change, intensity, etc.). It is therefore fundamental to recognise that each (external) intervention of an ANGIC is only one step in a change process;
- Change is a continuous process. A development intervention has a limited duration. It is part of a process of change that is already ongoing and will continue beyond that time. The ANGICs have to decide where and how to intervene in this process;
- Change is a non-linear process. **Processes of social change are not linear**. Depending on the individual and collective decisions and behaviours, these processes experience ups and downs, backing out, questioning, counteractions, etc.
- The ANGICs themselves change too. A development intervention is often aimed at helping to bring about changes in other social actors, but the ANGIC is also likely to change, i.e. change its mandate, adapt insights, change strategies, change behaviour, etc. of its own accord and/or under the influence of other actors.

The ToC is therefore an instrument that primarily focuses its analysis on social actors and how they can/will change their practices, their policies and the way they interact with each other. **Basically, what you do in a ToC is determine which actors are (or are not) behind certain social changes and then envision ('imagine') how these actors can change in the long term and ultimately adopt a certain behaviour that is supposed to contribute to the realisation of ultimate change.**

## 2.4. The added value of a ToC

Opinions on the added value of a ToC and its quality may differ considerably. There are different visions, both among donors and the ANGICs. Therefore, it is useful to explain the vision of the authors of this guide in this respect.

According to the authors, a good quality ToC should allow an ANGIC to better assess, monitor and understand/interpret change processes so that interventions can be adapted on time if necessary.

As stated earlier, an ANGIC can use a **ToC to project what kind of changes and change processes, according to its analysis (prediction or theoretical model of social change), are possible and advisable within a given context**. A ToC then explains the underlying assumptions about that change. Finally, the ToC invites the ANGIC to identify appropriate strategies for specific changes and to specify its intervention strategy. This supports the logical framework that functions as a planning and management tool for the implementation of the intervention. In order to make decisions about adjusting the intervention strategy and the implementation, the ANGIC can always fall back on the ToC.

The diagram below clearly shows where the ToC and the logical framework differ. This shows that **several shortcomings of the logical framework can be remedied when a ToC is your starting point**.

Logical framework	ToC
Standardised tool - little flexibility	No rigidity (yet) in the elaboration of a ToC
Can camouflage a rather weak analysis	Because the change process needs to be expounded, there is a greater guarantee of a robust analysis
Rather mechanically elaborated - hypotheses have little weight	The hypotheses are central to the ToC and are fully integrated
4 levels - simplified presentation of a participatory and in-depth discussion/risk of losing the richness of the process	As many levels as necessary - the presentation can explain the complexity and increase the understanding of possible change
There is often a 'missing middle' between the specific objective and the general objective	A 'missing middle' does not exist, because it is necessary to explain all intermediate steps and mechanisms that can lead to the realization of the 'ultimate change statement'
More like a 'one shot' activity aimed at managing one's own interventions	Iterative process. The ToC develops together with the context - verifying change processes outside the intervention reality is important and requires revision of the ToC

*Frame 1: Difference between a ToC and a logical framework (source: authors)*

The specificity of a ToC and its added value can be found in the elements below:

**Attention for contextualisation** - Change is always projected within a certain context. This can be a context of global trends, the context of a country or a particular domain. A ToC should always take that context into account. It should be possible to 'unpack' a ToC that is formulated at a very abstract level (e.g. the theme of human rights or capacity strengthening of civil society organisations in 15 countries) at a certain point in time by elaborating a regional or country sub-ToC that describes in more detail a possible change process in a specific context.

**Complexity and system thinking, and attention for actors and their mutual relationships** - Working with a TOC invites the ANGIC to acknowledge that change processes are complex, usually non-linear, strongly influenced by the context and by actors and the relationships between actors. This **attention for actors and their mutual relationships (and mutual influence) is essential**. A ToC makes it possible to gradually understand how the context and actors interact in change processes and where and how the ANGIC can best intervene.



### EXAMPLE

If you want to obtain a legal framework for a minimum wage (in one specific industry), the actors are the trade unions, the members of trade unions, the companies, the ministries of social affairs and work. With these actors you have to ask yourself several questions: What is the capacity of these actors? How do they (not) want to change themselves? What is the interrelation between the ministries? How powerful are the trade unions and who can improve the quality of consultation? ... The ANGCS can think together with the partners about changes required for the different actors and their interrelations and then see what they can initiate, support, facilitate, etc. with a programme.

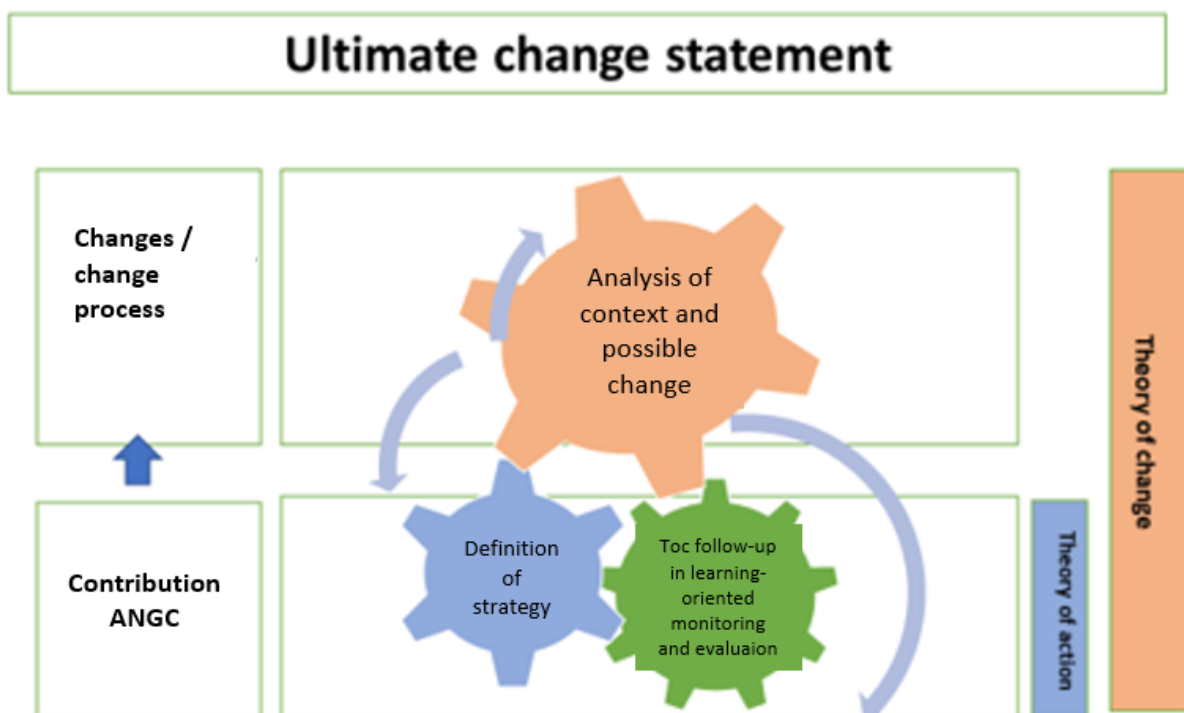
**Expounding underlying hypotheses (in other words: suppositions, assumptions, beliefs)**- With a ToC, the ANGCS projects how it thinks change will happen and what the intermediate steps are (also referred to as intermediate changes). This projection clarifies **the rationale of change** (from A follows B follows C, B influences D, and C in turn influences A, etc.). The rationale does not yet clarify *why* the ANGCS thinks that change happens this way (why does B follow from A?). Not infrequently, this is based on certain hypotheses about mechanisms of change. These hypotheses are sometimes based on values, sometimes on experience or research, sometimes on an existing theory but they are often not explicit. Because the hypotheses are not explicit, they are usually not the subject of discussion or monitoring or of a (practical) test. The question whether the hypothesis is right and whether the ANGCS may take it as a basis to plan its intervention, is therefore often omitted. However, it is essential within the complex environments in which the ANGCS operate. The ToC invites the ANGCS to explain its underlying hypotheses.

### EXAMPLE

Example: intervention in the context of capacity strengthening	Training of a team (participation to pathway with different modules)
Rationale	(Intermediary change 1) the knowledge and motivation of staff about what to do and how they can do it is strengthened which will result in (intermediate change 2) an improvement of the services to the target group.
Hypothesis: why do we think this is how it will happen?	Hypothesis 1: more competent and motivated staff are the main factor in guaranteeing better services (to be tested if not based on research or robust evaluations).

**Orienting the implementation by formulating learning questions and identifying focal points for monitoring and evaluation** - Thinking about change and hypotheses helps to maintain a critical mind in the elaboration and implementation of interventions. It keeps the ANGCS sharp and ready to regularly check the implementation of the interventions so that any necessary adjustments can be made in good time. The **image of a sailing boat** reflects this well: the sailor knows where he eventually wants to go, but has to take wind and current into account to determine the course. This also means that the sailing boat occasionally sails off course and sometimes has to try a different route.

**Decentralising the ANG C and its intervention** - By zooming out and better situating the ANG C's intervention within a broader projection of changes and change processes (often supported by a clear visual representation), the ANG C gains insight into the limits of its own intervention allowing it to better assess what contribution it can make, what is realistic and where and with whom it will have to collaborate. A TOC makes a **clear distinction between the change process and strategy**. This distinction between change and strategy is summarised in the diagram below: **'imagining' change is the basis for determining the strategy and determines the focus of monitoring and evaluation (M&E)**. Implementation and M&E will in turn possibly require the 'imagination' of change to be adjusted and the strategy to be adapted accordingly. The intervention strategy of the ANG C is also referred to as 'theory of action' in the HIVOS approach (HIVOS, 2015). This guide uses this wording. The thinking about strategy can be supported by using the so-called 'spheres of influence' (see further in the next chapter).



*Frame 2: Schematic representation of the Theory of Change (source: authors)*

### 3. HOW TO DEVELOP A GOOD QUALITY TOC

A ToC is the result of a process of reflection on change (of actors) and how the ANGC intends to contribute to this. The process for developing a ToC can be divided into **5 steps** or better, ‘building blocks’ which will be presented further in this chapter. The result or ‘product’ is a narrative and/or a schematic representation that you can use as a starting point to properly plan and follow up your interventions. Both the process and the result of that process are **coloured by the values and visions** of the ANGC, the themes focused on in the approach of the ANGC and its expertise. This is logical and **not ‘wrong’**: **as long as the ANGC adequately explains what its values and beliefs or assumptions are** and does not put itself at the centre of change, the organisation can be called to account for this and undergo an assessment (either internal or external).

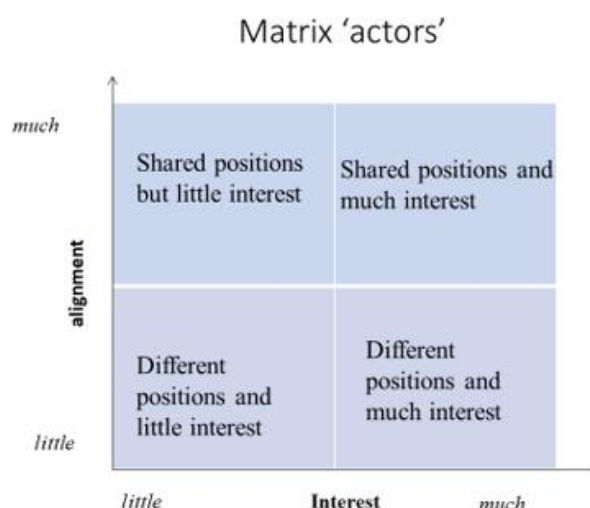
#### 3.1. Conditions

In practice it turns out to be difficult to make a ToC if the participants in the process do not support the approach, have insufficient insight into the context and if there is no clarity within the organisation about the basic model of social change in line with the ANGC’s vision. That is why they are seen as 3 conditions in a ToC process:

- 1) Working with the ToC within the organisation presupposes that there is **agreement** about **the use and added value of the ToC**.
- 2) **Context analysis** - Another necessary condition is a good context analysis, mapping and analysis of actors that play a role in change and their underlying relations. These context analyses are usually available (literature, own analyses, JSF analysis), but sometimes still need to be refined. Many tools are available to carry out this analysis, including the so-called ‘power cube’.<sup>1</sup> The result of the analysis can be presented in a simple matrix (which can be used again when the progress is evaluated): the vertical axis shows the extent to which the actors support the proposed change (who are the ‘supporters’), the horizontal axis shows what their influence is (see also Chapter 5 in this document). The frame below gives an example of a matrix showing the influence of the actors and the importance of the proposed change for them.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.powercube.net/an-introduction-to-power-analysis/>



*Frame 3: Matrix for identifying actors and their position with regard to change (source: authors)*

- 3) **Vision on social change within the organisation** - An important condition is a shared understanding within the ANGC about how they see social change and which model of change best suits the organisation. Without a specific model, it is difficult to think about change and to enter into a dialogue with each other. You will soon get the feeling that the discussion is 'going in all directions' and that the process becomes too chaotic. In the basic training of the learning pathway, this was discussed in more detail and various models of change were presented in an introductory exercise. During the training the participating ANGCs clearly seemed to identify with certain models (in fact also theories of change), even though these were not explicitly identified within the organisation. It was interesting to observe that other organisations work with different models and this made it clear how important it is to make an explicit choice, to ensure that your way of thinking is clear to the others and that you have a clear basis for further discussion. In Annex 6.1 you will find some examples of the models of change.

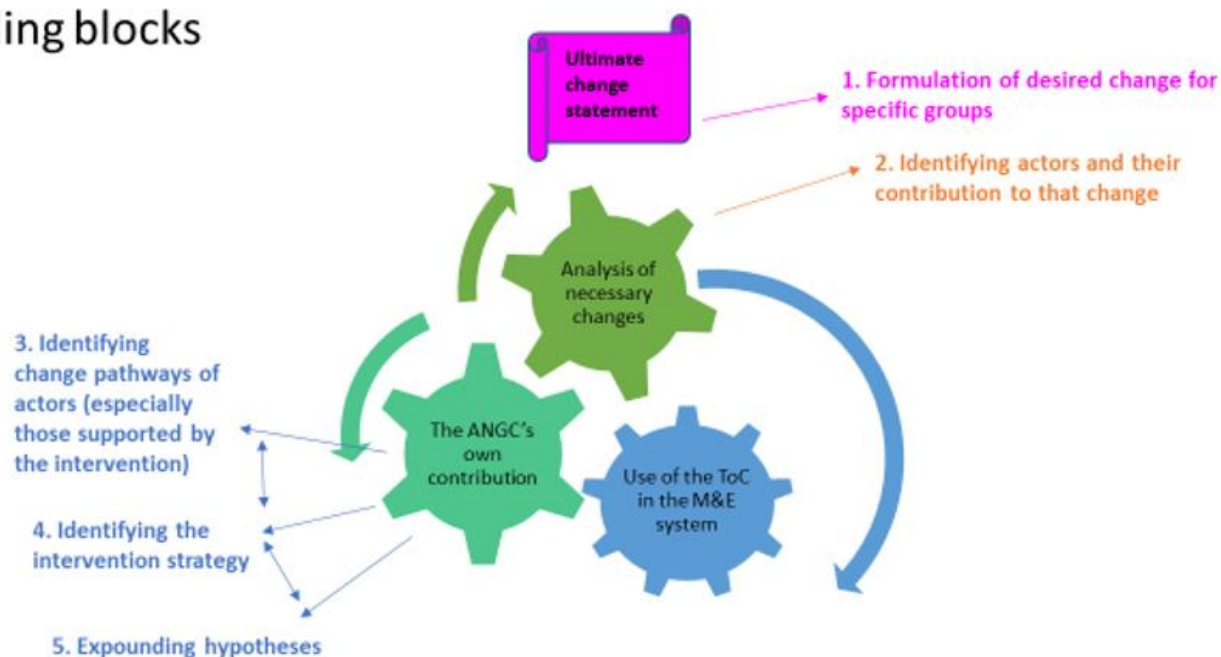
### 3.2. At what level do you develop a ToC?

A ToC can be developed at various levels: strategic level, programme level, thematic level, country level, project intervention, ... The choice is for the ANGC to make. In the context of DGD programming, the training recommended working on a **ToC at a strategic level** with a 10-year time horizon and to be further developed per country or theme and/or serve as a framework for the identification of projects and interventions in the shorter term (for DGD but also for other funders). A ToC at a strategic level allows various sub-ToCs to be joined together and to maintain coherence, while continuously monitoring the intended impact in terms of 'ultimate change statement'. This is important for organisations operating in various countries and on various themes and/or working within a particular alliance or consortium and/or having many different donors.

### 3.3. ToC building blocks

The figure below shows which five building blocks are required to work on a Theory of Change. In this section we will explain each of the building blocks. In each step, specific questions need to be considered and answered.

#### ToC building blocks



Frame 4: the five building blocks of the ToC (source: authors)

**Building block 1: Formulation of an ultimate change (ultimate change statement)** - An ultimate change is quite bold. It specifically and concretely expresses **for whom (group, part of the population) a certain situation should be improved and to what end**. It has a time horizon of about 10 years. The ultimate change indicates that the ANGNC thinks from the perspective of **impact** and allows this relation with impact to be consolidated when developing the change processes and strategies. The 'ultimate change statement' can be compared to the 'vision' of an organisation, but in the case of the ToC it is more specific and concrete.

In order to actually formulate an ultimate change, the ANGNC should consider the following questions:

- What is the change that is necessary and expedient within a given context?
- Why do we think it is? (See below under building block 5: Expounding the hypotheses)
- Who (which group of the population, M/F) will it help or who will benefit from it?
- What is the urgency?

## EXAMPLES

Two examples:

*“There is decent work for women in Southern countries because business in those countries provides better working conditions for women through compliance with labour laws, compliance with decent work agenda and implementation of a gender just corporate social responsibility (HIVOS, project Women at work).” This example also refers to the path of change that is necessary.*

*Fictional example: ‘By 2030, more young people between the ages of 18 and 25 will concretely and in various ways be involved in issues related to the economy, society and the environment. They will develop their own initiatives and/or participate in initiatives of civil society organisations at a local and global level.’*

*(Source: authors)*

**Building block 2: Identifying actors and the change they need to go through to contribute to the ultimate change** - Actors can be institutions, organisations or groups. The changes have to do with knowledge, competencies, attitudes, actions and relationships; often a combination. It is advisable in this phase to revert back to the context analysis and (if necessary) to specify the relationships between the various actors in more detail (relationships of power, influence, collaboration, etc.). These relationships will also influence the processes of change.

These are the questions that may help:

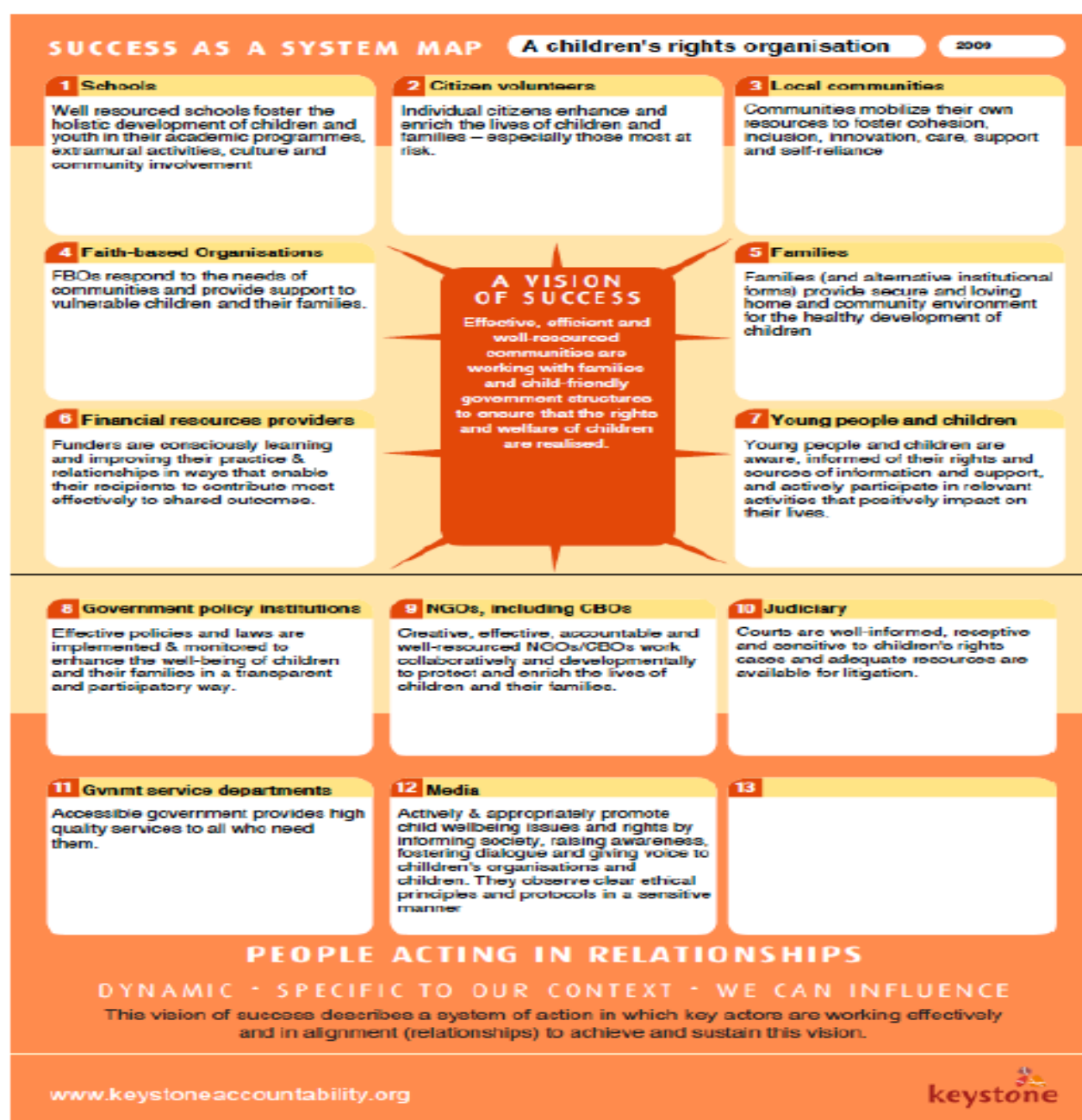
- What should change?
- What kind of behaviour should each of the actors ultimately adopt in order to make the change possible? Or what attitude should they display and/or how should they interact with other actors?
- What is the interrelation between the actors? Who influences who?
- Why do we think these are the actors that matter? (expounding the hypotheses)

It is important at this point to be clear about the **position of ANGC’s partners** in the partner countries (usually there are partners in the partner countries, but it is also important in the programmes that are implemented in Belgium or at the European or international level): who are our partners? Does the ANGC see them as actors whose change process needs to be supported so that they in turn can contribute to the ultimate change (and do those partners know that?), or are the partners part of the programme and are they co-executors? Or both: **are partners both actors of change and executors? And what does this imply for the cooperation?**

An example of the identification of actors is shown in Keystone’s diagram below, in which the ‘ultimate change statement’ is called a ‘vision of success’: *“Effective, efficient and well-resourced communities are working with families and child friendly government structures to ensure that the rights and welfare of children are ensured”* (the last part of the statement being the most important part). The diagram identifies the various actors, including schools, citizen volunteers, donors) and specifies the necessary change at their level: for example, schools should offer a holistic educational programme, volunteers should be able to enrich children’s lives (especially in the at-risk groups) with an appropriate offer, and donors should

learn how best to support organisations so that they can develop and implement programmes in the best possible way.

**Example:** This is how the children's rights organization expressed its vision of success:



*Frame 5: Keystone example for the definition of actors and how they should ultimately change (Source: <http://keystoneaccountability.org/>)*

**Building block 3: Identifying paths of change** - The ANGC thinks about how change happens and prefers to do this per actor (especially if the change process is very specific). ANGC can choose to make a ToC very comprehensive or determine at this time what it can and wants to work on: which are the actors that the ANGC, given the experience and expertise of the ANGC and its relations, can influence with the most



success within a certain period of time? The advantage of this 'short cut' is that the ANGC avoids getting bogged down in details and engaging too much in the analysis of things it can't or won't work on anyway. At the same time, it remains clear what the ANGC is not going to work on. This remains important in understanding change processes in their broader context.

The central questions to be asked are the following:

- How could change for each of these actors take place within a specific context?
- What are the necessary interim changes?
- For every interim change: what needs to change first in order to achieve it?
- Why do we think one change will lead to another?
- Will the changes be different for men and women (or for young and old people, members of different ethnic groups, etc.)?
- Where do the processes of change overlap? Because actors relate to each other, the paths of change will also interact with each other. It is important to investigate where (interim) changes will influence other actors (and their path of change).

The ANGCs who participated in the learning pathway experienced three specific problems in answering these questions:

(i) it appeared to be very difficult to take the intended ultimate change as a starting point and not the activities or support that the ANGC might be able to offer (the potential strategy or 'theory of action'). ANGCs often started their answer to the questions with, 'we strengthen the capacity of the actors', 'we develop educational material'. **A ToC is not a summary of what the ANGC will do, but first and foremost describes an intended change.** In a next step, the ANGC can think about where and how it can intervene in change processes that are supposed to take place. It is possible that processes of change are initiated by the ANGC, but in the further course of a programme other actors and factors will always start to play their role. This means that the ANGC will always have to investigate where and how it can best support, facilitate, take over, delegate, and so on.

(ii) '**backward thinking**' refers to what needs to be done before the necessary change takes place. In practice, this appears to be very difficult and it clearly requires some practice. Thinking about change from the perspective of the ANGC's offer is easier, but limits the thinking process about change. It reduces the chance that the ANGC will be critical enough about its own offer (are there any alternatives, where can we or should we probably do things differently?). During the training, the exercise was done taking two different perspectives as a starting point: thinking from the perspective of a necessary change and thinking from the perspective of strategy/activities. This exercise revealed that ANGCs who used the second perspective had much less 'imagination' in working out possible and necessary changes.

(iii) **identify relationships** between changes and paths of change. This can be done, for example, in a diagram using arrows. This work often resulted in chaotic schedules during the training: this too is a process and may require some training in systemic thinking.



**Building block 4: Identifying the intervention strategy** - It is more than likely that the ANGK will not be able to focus on all change processes and will therefore have to make choices. In the training we linked this step to the concept of 'theory of action' - or also, the strategy of intervention - which clarifies in which way the ANGK thinks it can and should intervene, within which change processes and with regard to which intermediate changes. The ANGK should keep in mind that its interventions are not the focus, but part of a complex interplay of various factors and actors and that the first requirement is to think carefully about how it can interact with them. In doing so, it should take into account that different ways may be possible.

The central questions to be asked are the following:

- Where in the change process can the ANGK influence and support change in actors?
- Where are we going to initiate (initiate change) and where are we going to provide support?
- In which way? What is the most appropriate strategy for this actor and this process of change?
- Why do we think this intervention is the most appropriate one? (explain the hypothesis(s) on how the contribution of the ANGK contributes to change).
- Are there possible alternative strategies?
- Should we combine strategies?
- What can't we do and should we do together with other programmes/ANGKs/other actors?
- Will our strategies have the same effect on men and women (or on young and old people, members of different ethnic groups, etc.)?

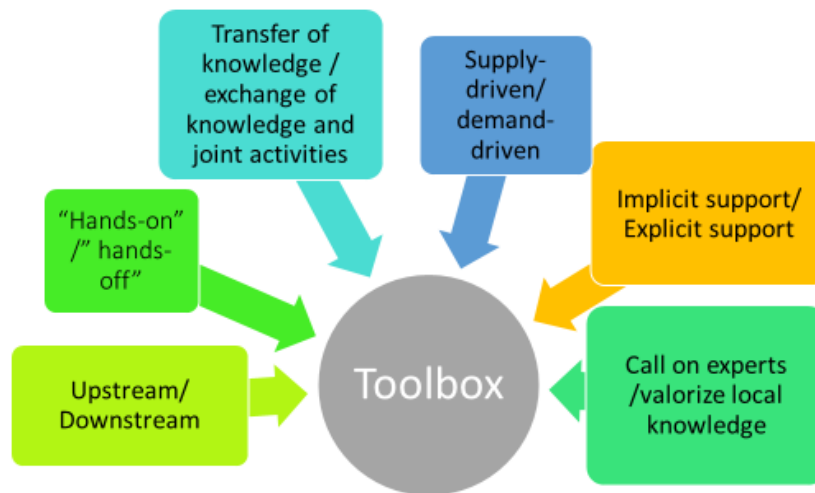
**Strategies can be diverse:** capacity building, ensuring access to finance, awareness-raising, policy influencing, etc. Various strategic choices are often still possible within these strategies, before proceeding to formulate very concrete activities. The 2010 evaluation commissioned by the Special Evaluation Service on the approach to capacity building by Belgian NGOs (Huyse, et Al., 2010) explains that behind every strategic choice, e.g. for capacity building, there are choices for partial strategies, each with their advantages and disadvantages and their own dynamics.<sup>2</sup> It is important to specify this so that it becomes possible to monitor and evaluate the ANGK's contribution to change more precisely and assess which strategy offers the best opportunities.

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<sup>2</sup>

[https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/evaluatie\\_ngo\\_partnerschappen\\_capaciteitsvers terking\\_nl.pdf](https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/evaluatie_ngo_partnerschappen_capaciteitsvers terking_nl.pdf)

## Six strategic options of support for capacity building



*Frame 6: Strategy of support for capacity building (Source: Evaluation of the NGO partnership in view of capacity building, 2010)*

In this step (building block 4) and when defining the intervention strategy, you can work with the **concept of the 'spheres of influence'** (see frame). To ensure that your interventions are feasible and realistic, you should determine which change processes and intermediate steps you can affect as an ANG: what can you control and influence (e.g. within the time frame of 5 years, with the available resources and capacity)? Where's your leverage to work on impact? How can you ensure that, even with very limited influence, you still work towards impact (spheres of interest)? How plausible is this? Working with the 'spheres of influence' can also be useful further on in the process to translate certain parts of the ToC into a logical framework of a programme (see below in Chapter 4).

Because 'feasible' and 'realistic' are not always the same as 'necessary' or 'sufficient', it is important to work together with others. Therefore, make sure to pay adequate attention to other ANGAs and actors who can influence and support change.

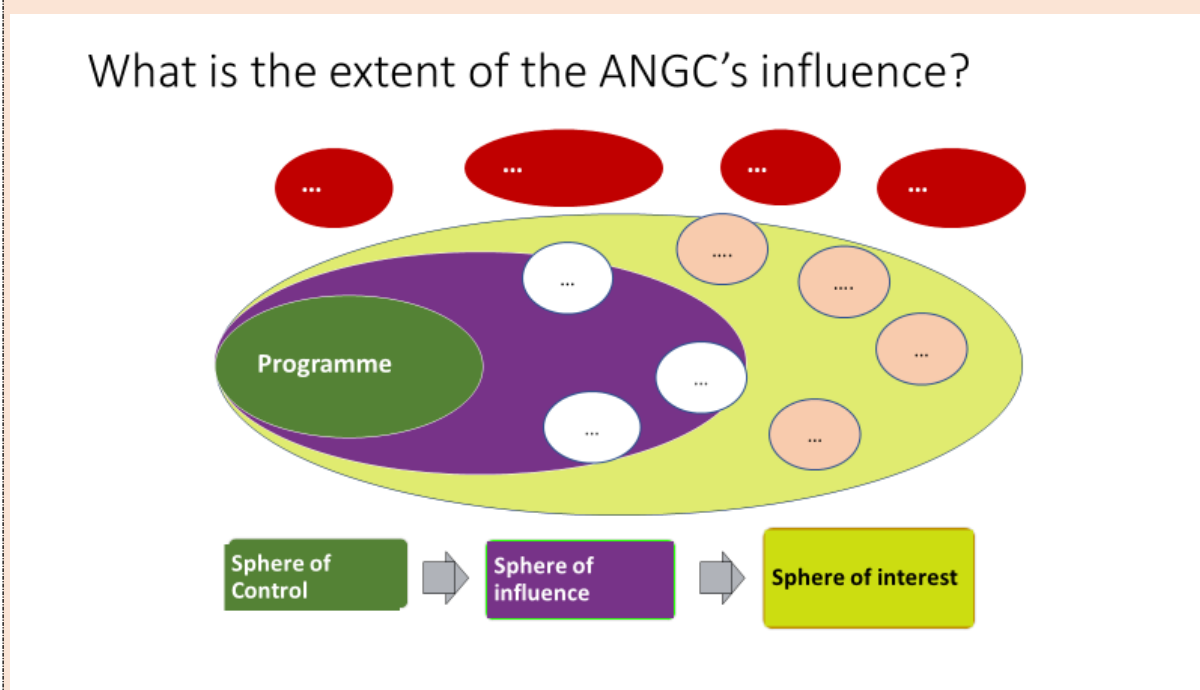
Ideally, the ToC drafted by the ANG shows change processes which are either not 'covered' by the strategy of the ANG or propose alternative paths of change ('it can be done this way, but also this way'). In the implementation of programmes, it is useful to occasionally revert back to these alternative paths of change and wonder how they influence the contribution to impact and whether the ANG should not work on them after all.

The key questions in this step are: what can we do? Do we have to do something different? Do we do so alone or with others?

## SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

There are three spheres of influence: sphere of control, influence and impact. This is clarified in the diagram below. These spheres indicate: (1) what is within the control of an ANG (at the level of the team and the programme activities), (2) what can be influenced by the ANG (often these are intermediary actors and organisations with whom the ANG can build a relationship and where the ANG can support and facilitate) and (3) what these actors in turn can contribute to impact.

Working with these 'spheres' is derived from an approach to formulate programmes referred to as 'outcome mapping'. **There is a clear overlap between the ToC as an approach and 'outcome mapping'**: both focus on actors and state that the ANG can initiate, support and facilitate change processes for actors, but that it is difficult for them to intervene directly. The actors are expected to reach the final target group and/or contribute to a change in the conditions for development (impact). Working with the three spheres contributes to a more realistic idea of what an ANG can achieve. Want to read more? See the literature list.



Frame 7: Spheres of influence (Source: based on <https://www.outcomemapping.ca/>)

**Building block 5: Expounding hypotheses** - The expounding of hypotheses runs like a thread through the ToC and the 4 building blocks described above. It is essential that the ANG identifies the assumptions and beliefs and also clarifies what they are based on.

In each ToC you can formulate **different types of hypotheses**:

- About the actors: why do we think that this actor can influence that particular change (among those actors)?
- The strategy: why do we think that – for example – raising awareness can initiate change more easily than lobbying?
- The influence of one change on another: why will people with more knowledge also start to behave differently?

- Factors in the context over which you have no control, but which do influence your project (both in a positive and in a negative way).

**Expounding hypotheses helps to identify relevant risks.** In particular, hypotheses that are not or not largely supported by practice, evaluation or research, i.e. which are highly uncertain and at the same time essential in the theory of change, constitute a risk to the achievement of the intended change. The ANGIC does not always have a direct answer to this: it is not always clear whether the hypothesis is correct or not, especially if you want to invest in new change processes or new contexts. These ‘critical hypotheses’ must therefore be properly monitored and tested so that they can be validated (or adapted, if necessary).

#### EXAMPLE

If you train people and want them to adapt their behaviour or apply skills, you may start from the hypothesis that their organisation will create the space for this. If you are not sure about this and if it is important for the further change process, it is good to verify this (and possibly adjust your strategy by taking direct action towards this).

**However, make sure to monitor the relevance of hypotheses:** do not necessarily come up with a hypothesis for every change or arrow in the ToC diagram because you think you have to. Focus on what your analysis says is important for contributing to impact and what you are not sure of.

The importance of this thinking? A good identification of hypotheses allows you to formulate relevant risks in your programme: after all, every hypothesis that has not been validated constitutes a risk.

### 3.4. How to organise a process for the formulation of a ToC

#### **Preparation:**

- Create support within the organisation and with the partners: in general, the **partners should ideally be involved in the process as much as possible**.
- Make sure that the process to achieve a ToC is in line with important moments in the organisation (e.g. in advance or as a basis for strategic planning).
- Together with the team and the partners, answer the following question: why is a ToC important to us and what do we expect from it?
- Gather in one discussion document: the lessons learned from previous evaluations and the main trends in the current context.

#### **Start:**

- Start with a ToC on a strategic level (organisation, programme).
- Plan the process: this can be different for each organisation depending on the available time and resources. Reserve **sufficient lead time (at least 3 months)**. Yes, it is possible to reach a diagram of change in a few days, but if you want a diagram that is understood by everyone and that is

useful during the execution of a program, you will need a longer lead time and discussion. Provide a **mix of brainstorming and consolidation, and a mix of working in a small group and feedback to a wider group**. Note: the **process is not linear** and sometimes you have to revert back to a number of things.

- Determine who participates, why and how: It is conceivable that the ANGIC works with a smaller team which will consolidate and clearly communicate the different steps. However, the process must allow a wider group to be involved. The composition of that wider group depends on the type of partner relationships of the ANGIC. At the very least, key stakeholders should know that the ANGIC works with the ToC approach and should be able to ask questions about it, but ideally, they should be closely involved.

**Development:** Use the 5 steps or building blocks to formulate a ToC (see above).

**Finalisation:** Country with a product which works for the organisation. This means: a product that clarifies for everyone what the programme will address and how it could work. Make sure to clearly link the ToC to monitoring and evaluation.

**Points of attention:**

- When getting acquainted with the ToC for the first time, it is advisable to use the specific question of a ToC approach before you decide to set up large-scale ToC pathways with associated tools (see the questions above for each building block).
- **Make sure to clearly discuss the position of all partners in the ToC.** These will often be actors of change (who are supported by the ANGIC), as well as organisations that initiate, facilitate and support change. These two positions can exist side by side but need to be made clearly communicated.
- Place the critical question of the ToC above its schematic representation ('process before product').

Use the critical reading list (see Annex 6.2), '**First aid for the critical reading of a ToC**', which was developed as part of the training programme. This reading list formulates a number of questions for each step, which force the ANGIC to critically question its projection of change. The reading list was tested in the training with the ANGICs and was found to be relevant and supportive.

### **SUMMARY: How to formulate a good quality ToC**

- A ToC is a process and a product that **clarifies and clearly communicates** the thinking about and **the projecting of change so that it can be properly followed up**.
- **The ToC answers the following questions:** for whom do we ultimately want to make a difference and what does that difference look like for that (those) group(s)? Which actors would have to change and how would the process take place? Who or what has an influence on the process? Which change processes can be initiated, facilitated and supported by the ANGC? What are the most appropriate strategies? Why would the change and the ANGC's contribution to this change go as the ANGC thinks it will? Are ways of change and effects of strategies the same for men and for women (or by extension for ethnic diverse groups)?
- **A ToC becomes a reference** which can support and orient the ANGC in the implementation of programmes (e.g. in case the context changes, a strategy does not work, a change does not occur as expected). A ToC also requires amendments and adjustments from time to time.
- **Remain aware of complexity:** pay sufficient attention to hypotheses, do not fall into the trap of putting change on a par with the ANGC's programme, avoid far-reaching simplification in a schematic representation and the narrative (the ToC is more than a communication product).
- Look critically at the formulation of your ToC and use the 'First aid for a critical reading'.

*Frame 8: Summary: How to formulate a good quality ToC?*

## 4. USING THE TOC TO SUPPORT YOUR PROGRAMME FORMULATION

Because most organisations opt for a logical framework when applying for DGD funding, it was decided, within this learning pathway, to explain the use of the ToC in the context of this practice. Other applications are also possible (e.g. the use of the ToC as a management tool, so without a logical framework), but these will not be discussed here.

### 4.1. The potential of the ToC to create a strong(er) programme

All Belgian ANGCS now have a first experience in developing a ToC. During the learning process it appeared that once the 'product' was there, it was not easy for most to continue using it. The federations therefore asked, during the training, to explain how the ToC can be used.

In the context of the Belgian ANGCS financed by the DGD, the use of the ToC is primarily about translating it into a concrete programme or project proposal within a logical framework (formulation). In the next chapter we will discuss the use of the ToC for monitoring and evaluation. Note: this chapter does not discuss project formulation as such or result-oriented management.

**Link between ToC and logical framework.** The learning pathway revealed an important question that was raised by participants: how can a ToC approach be combined with the logical framework and what is the difference between the two (the latter was explained with a scheme in Chapter 2)? The answer to 'how to combine' is short: the ToC can be seen as a **tool for analysing and projecting change and for identifying opportunities for intervention**. The logical framework, on the other hand, is a tool for **project formulation**:

- **The ToC allows you to zoom out** and see the programme of an ANGCS and its logical framework within a broader vision of change and the pursuit of impact. It makes clear what the ANGCS will work on (and what it will not work on). In this way, a number of shortcomings in the logical framework are remedied.
- Because the ToC outlines a broader framework and defines the intervention of the ANGCS within this broader perspective, the ToC offers **more flexibility to reflect on strategies** and to change and adapt them.
- In designing a ToC, the ANGCS can more easily **withstand the pressure of a strongly linear representation of change**, which is more typical of the logical framework.
- A **ToC connects the interventions of the ANGCS with various change processes and with the intended impact**. And precisely this impact is what is often not clear in a logical framework.

**The added value** of a ToC in conceiving a strong programme with a relevant results framework also lies in the opportunity it provides to (i) identify more relevant risks, (ii) have a clear basis for discussions about cooperation with other organisations and (iii) have a greater chance of formulating more relevant indicators or focal points for monitoring. We will discuss these three points below:

**(i) Identifying relevant risks for the logical framework** - a ToC allows you to quickly come up with relevant hypotheses which can subsequently be used in your logical framework and in the risk analysis. For example, hypotheses about the role of context factors are useful to enter into the hypotheses column in the logical framework, i.e. the column about external factors over which you, as an ANGC, have no control but which do influence change processes and your own planned results. This guide will not discuss risk analysis as such in more detail.

**(ii) Basis for discussion on cooperation** - The ToC clearly outlines the ‘zones’ which the ANGC has decided not to work on. Being explicit about one’s own choices and limits is a good start for dialogue with other actors who can or want to support change (e.g. other ANGCs) and for a discussion about possible cooperation or synergy. Clarifying the hypotheses ensures that it is clear to others how the ANGC thinks about change. This, too, can help in the talks about possible cooperation.

**(iii) More relevant indicators** - Reflecting on change and change processes contributes to formulating more relevant indicators for measuring and monitoring change. For fear of a one-sided focus on accountability, ANGCs sometimes opt for easy-to-measure, quantitative indicators that often say something about the outputs (the direct effect of the ANGC offer on actors), but less about the further course of the change process with those actors. As a result, the set of indicators is often insufficient to monitor change and understand change processes: the indicators are often quantitative, while social changes lead to a multitude and diversity of progressive transformations that are difficult to trace back to a few figures. More relevant indicators therefore also means a different kind of indicators. The ToC invites to look beyond the ‘classic’ and SMART<sup>3</sup> indicators.

#### EXAMPLE

An example of the CIMADE<sup>4</sup> project, aimed at defending the rights of migrants in the countries along the migration routes, clarifies how to use ‘progress markers’, for example, to indicate what changes are possible in key ministries in Mauritania. The diagram on the left in the bottom figure shows how the project thinks that impact can be achieved through specific actors: in addition to ministries, it concerns a network of female elected representatives and the National Commission for Human Rights. On the right side of the figure are the ‘progress markers’.

<sup>3</sup> SMART stands for Specific/Measurable/Achievable of Attributable/Relevant/Timely.

<sup>4</sup> Van Ongevalle J. (2017). Guide de suivi-évaluation pour le volet plaidoyer du projet Loujna-Tounkaranké.

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## La Cimade Mauritanie



Map of the direct target groups of the association AMDH (Mauritania)



### Progress markers for key ministries

**We would love to see** the government of Niger draw up a draft law on national migration policy ensuring better protection of migrants' rights;

**We would like to see** the inter-ministerial committee consult at least once with the advocacy committee of the Loujna collective in defining the national agenda for migration management;

**We expect to see** that the inter-ministerial committee will receive the Loujna advocacy committee to discuss violations of migrants' rights on the roads of ECOWAS.



Frame 9: CIMADE example project: progress markers (Source: authors)

In order to use a change theory in a program, it is important to look beyond the 'conventional' indicators. Developed as part of the Outcome Mapping<sup>5</sup> method, 'progress markers' offer an alternative to traditional SMART indicators and can be used in a complementary way. The 'progress markers' describe perceptible changes in the behaviour, actions and relationships of a particular actor. 'Progress markers' are generally formulated in three levels which reflect the complexity of the intended change or change process: they try to unravel the complexity, making it easier to manage and respond to it. The three levels are: 'expect to see', 'like to see' and 'love to see'<sup>6</sup>.

- **Expect to see:** refers to changes that are relatively simple, but already reflect a change in practice or behaviour that goes in the direction of the ideal vision to which the programme wants to contribute. These changes are usually expected within the setting and duration of the intervention.
- **Like to see:** reflects changes that demonstrate a willingness and strong involvement of the actors. This level is unique because it is usually outside the direct influence of the development intervention.
- **Love to see:** corresponds to the type of 'ideal' behaviour as formulated in the final outcome of the path of change of the specific actor. It is not certain (or even unlikely) that the changes described at this level will be visible within the term and duration of the intervention.

The next chapter on the use of the ToC to orientate the monitoring and evaluation will return to this: progress markers and the ToC indeed require different kinds of tools and analysis frameworks for monitoring and evaluation.

<sup>5</sup> Outcome mapping is a method to plan, monitor and evaluate interventions. It was developed as an alternative to the logical framework.

<sup>6</sup> These levels correspond to the 'spheres of influence': 'expect to see' (sphere of direct influence), 'like to see' (spheres of indirect influence), 'love to see' (spheres of interest and impact).

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INDICATORS AND PROGRESS MARKERS

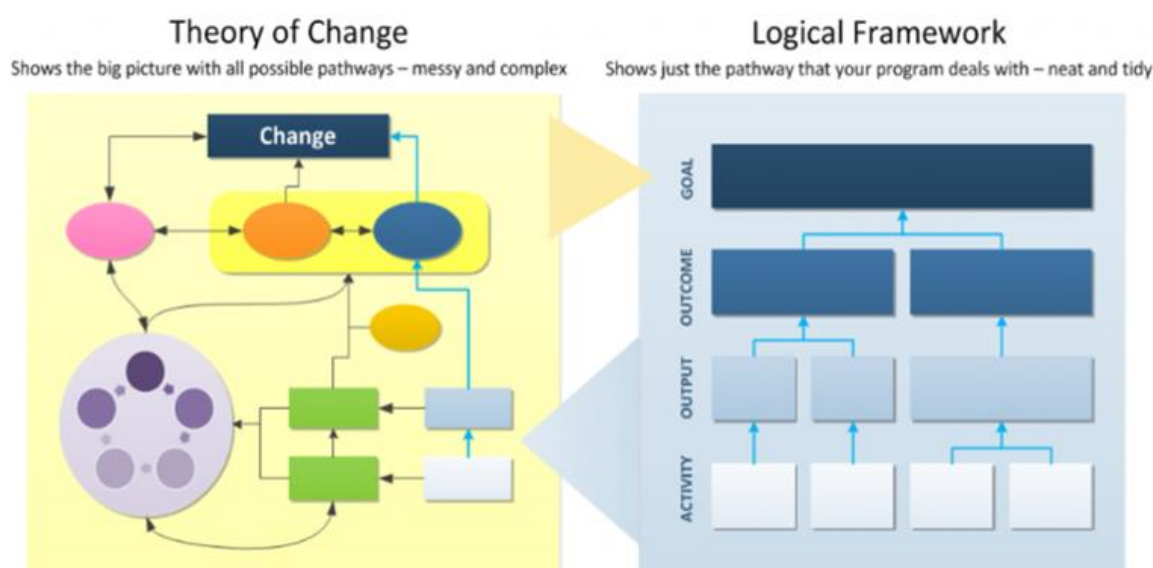
Progress markers:

- Focus on **behavioural changes of partners/actors** and are drawn up in cooperation with the partners and sometimes even the actors (no experts needed);
- **Come in a set** and detail the changes in terms of actions, relationships, policies and practices of actors; indicators are often formulated in general terms without going into sufficient detail (e.g. 'the capacity of the organisation is strengthened');
- **Could change in the course of the programme**; indicators are often predefined together with certain intermediate values;
- Are followed up in a way to also **capture unanticipated results**;
- **Have no time indications, targets or % in relation to an intended output**. This is, however, the case for indicators and this often means that 'easy' to achieve/measure are chosen;
- They do not constitute a checklist of achievements to be ticked off, but rather **a trigger for reflection/analysis** and the basis for a dialogue with partners that can lead to a deeper understanding of change processes and the contribution of the ANGCS and their interventions;
- **Differentiate the changes according to the degree of complexity** (some changes are 'easier' to realize and observe) and are therefore **often more realistic and contextual**;

*Frame 10: The difference between progress markers and indicators (Source: <https://www.outcomemapping.ca/>)*

## 4.2. How to translate a ToC into a logical framework

At the request of the participants in the learning pathway, the authors of this document went in search of tools for translating a ToC into a logical framework. After all, the idea is not to make a ToC that you are not going to use, or to have a ToC and logical framework that are exactly the same. You will indeed go from a broader analysis to a presentation of the intervention logic of your own programme, as explained in the slide below, but you still want a coherent programme that fits within the ToC:



*Frame 11: The difference between Theory of Change and logical framework (source: based upon <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/theory-of-change-vs-logical-framework-whats-the-difference-in-practice/>)*

There are some ways to translate the ToC into a logical framework (for a programme within a logical context). The most recommended method is working with the three spheres of influence. A second approach that is applied in practice is the definition of 'zones' or elements in the schematic representation of the ToC and rebuild and compose them in a logical framework. We will explain the two methods below:

**Spheres of control, influence and interest** (derived from outcome mapping) - The ANGC can indicate on the ToC which 'zones' in the change processes it can affect: which actors, parts of the change process, relationships... are part of the sphere of influence of the ANGC and what is more in the sphere of interest? **Sphere of Interest** often includes changes that contribute directly to impact or are equal to impact (i.e. changes in the conditions for development for specific target groups). **Sphere of influence** refers to actors and changes that are closer to the ANGC: the actors who are prepared, with the ANGC within a programme, to change in order to influence changes at and for other actors. Partners in partner countries are part of the sphere of influence. The **sphere of control** is about the programme and the team that carries it out with all corresponding resources and activities. Partners can also be part of the sphere of control (e.g. a project team or coordinator with the partner is part of the sphere of control of the programme and the rest of the partner organisation is in the sphere of influence).

Elements in the sphere of control are consistent with the logical framework of the activities and the level of outputs/results. Elements in the sphere of influence are consistent with the level of outputs/results (direct influence) or specific objective (outcomes, indirect influence). Elements in the sphere of interest are at the impact level (or general objective).

**Indicating the intervention on the schematic representation of the ToC** - The ANGC can indicate on the schematic representation of the ToC where, based on its resources and expertise, it can best intervene to initiate or support a change. It can indicate what needs to be done now and what can be tackled later if

necessary. It can indicate what an output is and what an outcome. This is very similar to the application of the 'spheres of influence'. The slides of the training include an example of the Red Cross Flanders: by means of a legend, the organisation makes clear what the outcomes are in the short term, the outcomes in the long term and the impact. Assumptions are also indicated and specific interventions (within the two chosen strategies of policy influencing and providing information) at the level at which they will be deployed.

When developing the logical framework based on a ToC, the following **additional questions** may help to arrive at a coherent logical framework and result-oriented formulation:

- What exactly can we influence? What is possible within the term of a programme? What is our expertise? What is our relation with the actors? What can we influence directly and what indirectly (e.g. through a relation between actors or through a specific actor)?
- Can we formulate the changes (short term, intermediate term, long term) even more specifically? What group of people, who, where, etc.?
- What does the donor (who has funds for this specific programme) want?
- What offers the best chance of success?
- What is necessary and should we do (possibly with others)?
- What are hypotheses about external factors influencing the project?

Important points of attention are the following:

- Consider the ToC as a starting point and an inspiration to formulate your intervention: this formulation implies choices and may only 'cover' part of the ToC.
- Don't: narrow the ToC down to a logical framework. The ToC is the starting point and precedes the definition of outputs and outcomes in the logical framework. Conversely, it may even make sense to better substantiate a logical framework by using the critical questioning of a ToC (this can even be done without having a ToC). Many ANGCS have already worked this way. Working in this way, however, ignores the specific added value of the ToC (compared to the logical framework) and the benefits described above.

#### **SUMMARY: How to use a ToC to support program formulation?**

- Due to the specific context of the ANGCS and their DGD funding, this chapter focuses on the link between the ToC and the logical framework.
- The ToC takes complexity into account and is therefore a tool for orientation and critical reflection during the implementation, keeping the focus on impact.
- The logical framework is more a tool for project formulation and management.
- **With a logical framework, the ANGCS opt for a certain simplification of the complexity.** The ANGCS makes choices about where it will intervene, taking into account its time, expertise and available resources. **Because of the link with the ToC, the logical framework (and the related programme) is more in line with the complexity thinking and the link between interventions and impact becomes stronger (stronger credibility instead of 'leap of faith').**

*Frame 12: Summary: How to use a ToC to support program formulation?*

## 5. USING THE TOC TO SUPPORT YOUR M&E SYSTEM

By means of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), the ANGCS can take stock of the situation at regular intervals:

- progress in the implementation of a development intervention;
- the changes that occur in a given context (apart from the activities of the programme).

Monitoring and evaluation is important for accountability, but it is also important for learning and adapting and adjusting programmes where necessary.

This chapter discusses the **link between the ToC and M&E and how M&E can better and more efficiently monitor complex change processes so that the ANGCS can gain more insight** into them and, as such, adapt its interventions and/or ToC where necessary.

Note: this chapter is not about setting up and implementing monitoring and evaluation of programmes as such: the authors start from the principle that all ANGCS have a system that determines what information needs to be collected in order to monitor the indicators of the logical framework and to manage planning and budgets properly. This already provides them with a first important source of information on the implementation and progress of their programme. The document also does not address specific monitoring tools for data collection or challenges in evaluation, such as evaluating impact and assessing a programme's contribution to change (contribution analysis).

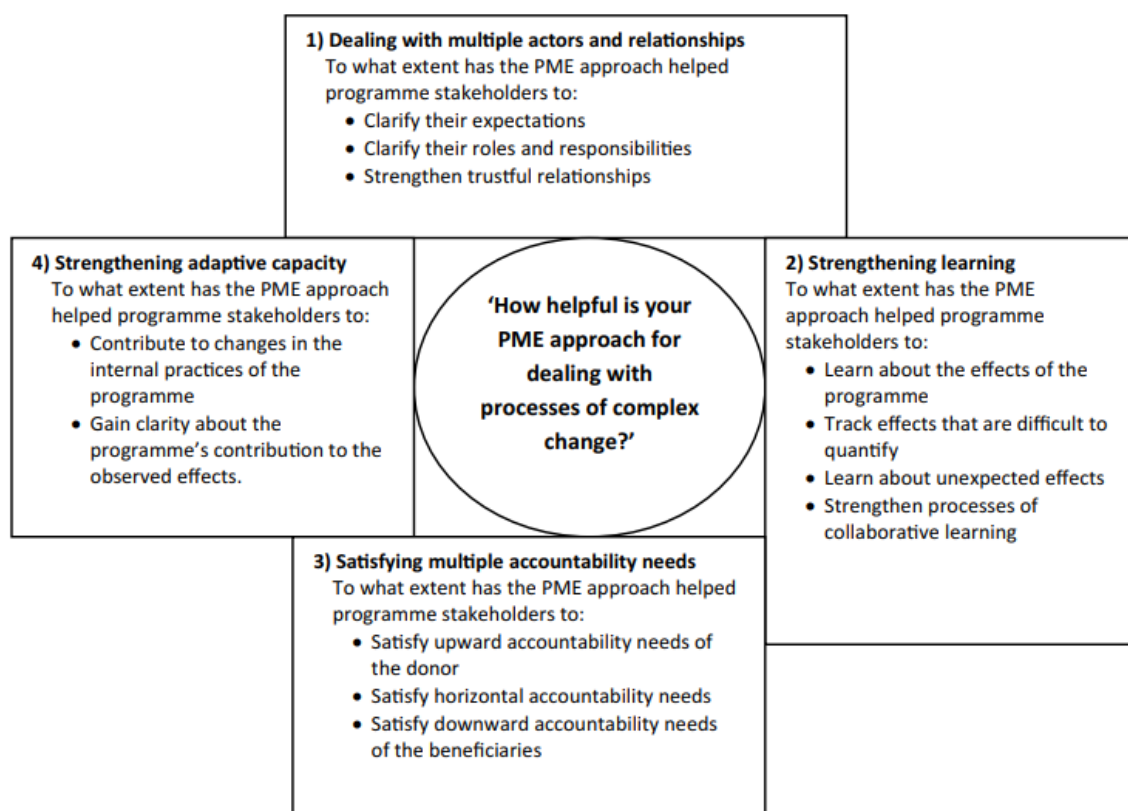
### 5.1. ToC, M&E, complexity and learning

Good use of ToC in programme delivery presupposes an approach to monitoring and evaluation in line with **complexity thinking** and the concern to **learning concerns**. This requires that the M&E practice is embedded in a system at the organisational level and that the complexity (and in particular the different needs of various actors) is considered when elaborating the focus, methods, data collection and analysis and reporting. This is an important starting point for what follows. The frames below indicate what the points for attention are and how you can check to what extent the M&E approach in your organisation pays attention to this. This document does not deal with this any further (as indicated in the beginning of this chapter).

## Building blocks of a learning-oriented M&E system:

<b>1. Purpose and scope</b>	Determine the purpose, the users, the scope and the target of the process of monitoring and evaluation as well as the principal evaluation and learning questions
<b>2. Strategy and values</b>	Why invest in M&E? What is the link between M&E and learning?
<b>3. Organisational spaces and rhythms</b>	Identify key moments (timing and frequency) for planning, reflection and analysis, decision making and reporting.
<b>4. Information needs</b>	Determine and prioritize the needs for information (partially to be translated into SMART indicators) and prioritize the learning questions.
<b>5. Plan for data collection, processing and analysis</b>	Make a plan for data collection, processing and analysis and specify the link with knowledge management.
<b>6. Plan for sense-making</b>	Make a plan for the use of the monitoring results and the critical reflection/analysis at key moments.
<b>7. Plan for documentation and communication</b>	Make a plan for the documentation/reporting and external communication of the monitoring results.
<b>8. Plan for strengthening organizational conditions</b>	Assessment and planning of the necessary conditions and capacities to establish a learning-oriented M&E system.

Frame 13: Good use of ToC in M&E presupposes a system at organisational level (Source: Steff Deprez)



Frame 14: A ToC supports an M&E approach aiming at dealing with complexity (Source: Van Ongevalle, J. e.a. (2014) *Dealing with complexity through actor-focused planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME)*)

## 5.2. The potential of a ToC to support M&E

A ToC is useful for developing an M&E approach that takes into account the complexity of social change processes and the links between them. At the same time an **adapted M&E is needed to evaluate** and validate or adjust the **ToC and intended change processes and underlying hypotheses**. The difference can mainly be made in the tools and analysis. Outcome mapping, and the attention it pays to self-evaluation by actors and reflection, is a well-suited approach (see also the ‘progress markers’ in Chapter 4). An interesting source of inspiration is the action research of the French-speaking organisation F3E, which looked for more suitable methods to monitor change processes (PRISME, ‘approches orientées changement’, see literature list).

A ToC:

- challenges the ANGC to look beyond the more ‘traditional’ and quantitative indicators of the logical framework, which are useful in themselves, but are often too limited to capture change processes (see 4.1);
- helps to define the focus and **priorities** of what needs to be monitored in addition to indicators;
- challenges the ANGC to **analyse** (complex) processes of change **more systematically**;
- orientates (self-)evaluation and **critical reflection** on change and the contribution of the ANGC to change. Good use of the ToC (approach) presupposes that the ANGCs take more account of the TOC in drawing up their M&E system.

The last three elements in the list above are explained in the following points.

## 5.3. Defining focus and priority in M&E

A ToC helps the ANGCs to think about what is important in the follow-up in order to gain a better insight into change processes. This allows the ANGC to adapt its interventions to the pace, trends and direction of these processes. It is therefore important, even in the stage where the ToC is formulated, to think about which aspects should be the subject of systematic monitoring, which learning questions should be addressed and what exactly should be evaluated during and at the end of a programme.

The ToC points out the importance of **being aware of what is changing in and around a programme**. At the same time, it is impossible to monitor all the changes to which a development intervention intends to contribute and to systematically monitor all phases of the change process. This would take too much time and generate too much information to process. **Choices must therefore be made according to what is important for the success of the strategy**. A change theory is a useful guide for determining these monitoring priorities with respect to:

- The actors: which actors are strategic for the changes we want to bring about?
- The types of changes: which processes are still unclear?
- The hypotheses: which hypotheses are critical (= important, but not or insufficiently validated)?
- The (new) strategies that are implemented and their contribution to change: do they work (well) enough?



During the learning pathway the ANGCS were challenged to look at the indicators of their programme and then to investigate which zones/elements of their ToC were followed and which were not. A second question was to investigate about which areas in the ToC the ANGCS should have more information in order to better monitor and understand the process of social change and to estimate the contribution of the ANGCS. The exercise showed that the indicators used were often not sufficient to monitor change and that several elements in a ToC that are crucial anyway, are actually not followed up during the implementation of a program.

Going over the above questions during the learning pathway proved useful to formulate specific learning questions which are then systematically included in the monitoring plan of the ANGCS (and complement the data collection on indicators).

#### EXAMPLE

An example is the ANGCS Plan Belgium in the children's rights schools project, which is implemented together with other ANGCS. The ToC mainly raised questions about the 'how' (and underlying hypotheses about change): how exactly does a certain approach work? What are the factors involved? What is the most effective strategy? These questions were included in the M&E manual of the children's rights schools project (see the example in Annex 6.3.).

## 5.4. Investing in more systematic data processing and analysis

An **important key lies in the reporting schemes that ANGCS use** (often linked to donor reporting) and in working with analysis frameworks that are consistent with the ToC. This is especially important for the teams in the partner countries: a simple adaptation of the way of reporting using appropriate analysis frameworks helps a team in the field to gain insight ('learning') and to go beyond reporting findings and describing activities and events.

An **adapted reporting scheme** - During the learning pathway, a simple reporting scheme of the CIMADE project was presented (see Annex 6.4.). It offers several advantages and indicates how a monitoring system can meet the need to follow up complex change processes in a qualitative and cost-efficient way. This is always in addition to quantitative data collection about indicators. This scheme is based on the 'progress markers' that were previously formulated to gather information about the progress of the project. Other reporting schemes, for example a diagram which considers the dimensions of empowerment<sup>7</sup>, are also conceivable.

The strengths of CIMADE's reporting scheme are as follows:

- The reporting scheme is simple enough to allow partners in the field and their teams to work with it fairly easily for systematic follow-up;
- The scheme invites teams in the field to regularly share their observations (on change) and initial reflections on factors that have played a (positive and negative) role and the possible

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/5500.pdf>



contribution of the programme. This is done in the example of CIMADE using codes<sup>8</sup> that simplify subsequent processing and may lead to new questions for monitoring and evaluation. The codes are interesting because they help to present things visually and are a basis for discussion rather than a final statement about the value of the point to which they refer;

- The schedule invites members of the team to regularly reflect on possible risks (in function of contributing to change and impact).

**In the ToC there is an important emphasis on the actors (their change and interrelationship) and on the distinction between change and strategy/intervention of the ANGC. An M&E system that takes the ToC approach into account will therefore pay much more attention to the analysis of both elements.** During the learning pathway, two relatively simple ways were proposed to analyse and schematically represent changes in actors and the contribution of the ANGC. Two different matrices were used: the contribution matrix and the actor matrix. The figures build on the same example of the CIMADE project (see Annex 6.4.).

**The contribution matrix** - A contribution matrix is an invitation to define observed and identified changes according to their importance (in achieving the 'ultimate change statement') and at the same time to estimate the contribution of the project. The diagram in Annex 6.4. gives an overview of major and minor changes, both planned and unplanned. At the top right, for example, it says that local elected representatives in Mauritania have taken the decision not to tax migrants in their municipality and that basic services such as water and electricity are offered free of charge. This was an important decision in which the project played an important role. A place can also be assigned to less positive changes. In addition, the schedule can be supplemented every year, so that changes over the years (also the contribution of the project) are immediately visible. The schedule thus forms a basis for discussion within the partner's team: are these the changes we were aiming for? It is enough? Is a lot happening, but without us having anything to do with it? Did we have much influence in the first year and now less? Etc.

**Actor Matrix** - This matrix is based on the matrix for actor mapping in context analysis. During an interim follow-up or evaluation, it is possible to see whether there is an evolution in the positioning of the actors. The diagram in Annex 6.4. shows that the local elected representatives (the same as in the contribution matrix) are located at the top of the right quadrant. This means that they are strongly involved in the project and support its objectives, and that they can also influence change. Both their support for the project and their influence on change have been reinforced in the second cycle of interim monitoring. This is made clear by the blue arrow in the diagram.

The participants suggested that this type of data collection and processing is rather subjective. This risk exists but is largely 'solved' by the use of multiple sources that are compared (**triangulation** of data sources): observations, self-reporting on 'progress markers', information on indicators, information on other programmes or government statistics, etc. Incidentally, the longer the project runs, the 'stricter' team members often become in the evaluation. Incidentally, the **added value** of this way of data collection

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<sup>8</sup> Of course, each project chooses how the codes are filled in: this will differ from project to project.

and processing also lies in the **ability to raise relevant questions for further discussion and reflection**. This presupposes, however, that the ANGCS organise space and time for that discussion and reflection.

## 5.5. Orientating strategic reflection

In practice, monitoring and evaluation is sometimes reduced to monitoring indicators (data collection) and identifying ‘stories of change’ or ‘good practices’. Evaluation is often seen as the task of an external consultant, while of course the idea is to include evaluation moments and learning questions in the follow-up of a programme and to give the team an important role in this. During the learning pathway this was referred to as ‘self-evaluation’. Moments of self-evaluation should be built in at least halfway through and at the end of a programme. These moments are important because they are a preparation for external evaluations (or peer evaluations) and because they can orientate the external evaluations with relevant questions that may be more difficult to answer by the ANGCS itself (e.g. because it is good to have an external view, because the methods require specific knowledge, etc.)

A ToC provides opportunities to prepare an interim evaluation or assessment by questioning the ‘theory’ just like it was conceived at the beginning of the programme: how the paths of change were supposed to develop, the positioning and actions of the main actors of change, the relevance and effectiveness of the support strategies. Evaluations make it possible to further investigate the assumptions on which the change theory is based. If the M&E indicates that certain activities do not result in the intended changes, the ToC may be a useful tool to zoom out to the broader and more complex overview of all the intended changes to see if there are alternative paths for which the ANGCS did not initially choose.

During the learning pathway, participants were invited to formulate questions on the basis of their ToC, which could be investigated by means of an evaluation. These could be learning questions (what can we learn about how change has happened) or accountability questions that meet the 5 evaluation criteria used by the OECD-DAC.<sup>9</sup> An overview of evaluation questions inspired by a ToC approach is included in the appendices to this document for inspiration (see Annex 6.5.).

During the learning pathway, two examples were also presented in which organisations (a Dutch and a Belgian NGO) used the ToC, the method of ‘outcome harvesting’<sup>10</sup> and a timeline to orientate their evaluation, more specifically to evaluate changes and the contribution of the project and to develop a good approach for self-evaluation.

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<sup>9</sup> The recently amended version is available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> More information on outcome harvesting:  
[https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/outcome\\_harvesting](https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/outcome_harvesting)

## OUTCOME HARVESTING

Outcome harvesting is an approach to evaluation that builds on insights from outcome mapping and also focuses on the actors and their vision on change. **Outcome harvesting fits well with the ToC approach:**

- It allows for the identification of **observed changes that various actors consider important** without requiring necessary reference to the programme indicators or objectives and a precise description those changes (with indication of evidence).
- It therefore allows **a diverse range of changes to be captured** (positive/negative, planned/not planned, large/small).
- It invites to making an **analysis of the contribution of one's own intervention**: was it sufficient, adequate, essential? Did we mainly support or also initiate changes?
- It makes **it possible to situate changes within the ToC and thus question the ToC**.
- If systematically addressed and linked to other methods, this approach is a reliable and valid way of evaluation which can contribute to a robust evaluation. A combination of quantitative (e.g. through surveys) and qualitative methods (e.g. narrative methods) can be considered here.
- The added value of the approach is that it is **tailored to the capacity** (competencies and available time) of the local team.

### *Frame 15: What is outcome harvesting?*

Typical questions inspired by a ToC approach can support a strategic reflection on findings arising from monitoring and evaluation:

- What can we learn from findings about change?
- For which groups (think for example of the gender dimension) was it positive/less positive?
- How sustainable are these changes? Are additional interventions needed to ensure sustainability?
- Are these changes sufficient to contribute to the 'ultimate change statement' in the ToC?
- What do the monitoring and evaluation say about the ToC? Do we need to adjust/refine the paths of change? Or develop other 'pathways', strategies and activities?
- What do we want to focus on in the coming months? Changes, our contribution, learning questions, analysis of hypotheses?
- What does this mean for the formulation of the (new/next) programme? Are adjustments needed? Should we be more realistic or just more ambitious?

### **SUMMARY: Using the ToC to support your M&E system**

- **A ToC presupposes a system for M&E that takes complexity into account and pays attention to learning.**
- A ToC challenges the ANGCS to look beyond the more ‘traditional’ and quantitative indicators of the logical framework, which are useful in themselves, but are often too limited to capture change processes.
- **The ToC invites to setting priorities in what needs to be monitored besides indicators and challenges the ANGCS to monitor (complex) change processes more systematically and orientate evaluation and critical reflection.**
- Good use of the ToC (approach) presupposes that the ANGCS take more account of the TOC representation of change in drawing up their M&E system.
- **A more adapted M&E is not necessarily more complicated or heavier.** It is often mainly a matter of looking beyond the indicators of the logical framework, of asking the right questions and **ensuring an analysis of collected data on changes** among actors and the contribution of development intervention.
- It may be sufficient to look for adapted and simple reporting or analysis schemes and to organise a discussion on the questions raised by this analysis.

*Frame 16: Summary: Using the ToC to support the M&E system*

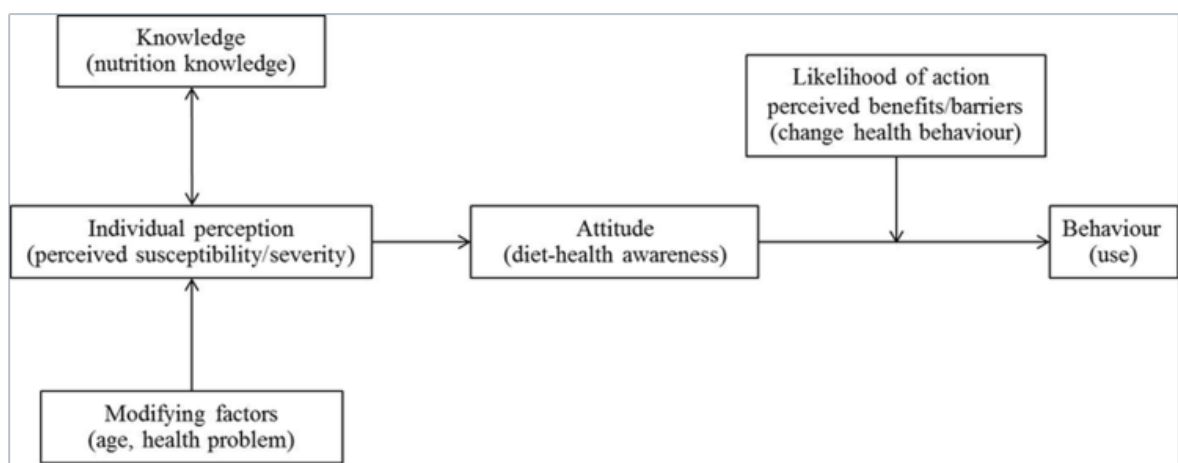
## 6. ANNEXES

### 6.1. Examples of change models

Source: training material ACE Europe for ngo-federatie

#### Model 1

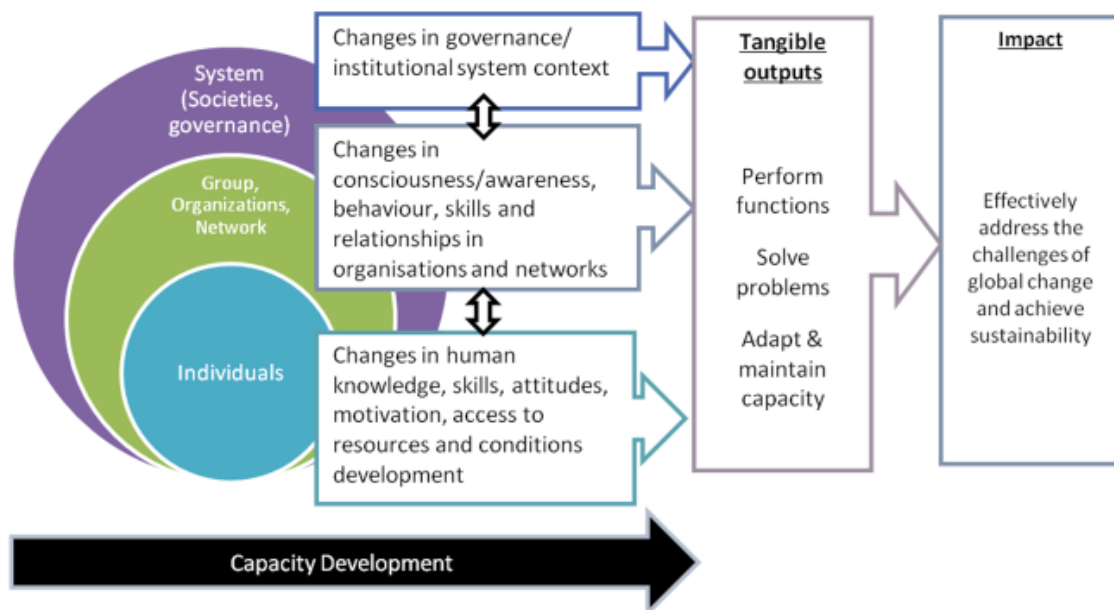
Many theories on change exist ...



#### Model 2



### Model 3



Message: it helps to work with a change model, when developing a ToC!

## 6.2. First aid for the critical reading of a ToC

Questionnaire for the critical reading of the ToC	Answers
<b>1. ULTIMATE CHANGE/'CHANGE STATEMENT'</b>	
1. Change for whom? The social groups whose situation should eventually improve according to the ANG (Actor of Non-Governmental Co-operation), are clearly identified in the 'change statement' and are specifically described in a gender-sensitive way.	
2. Change where? The 'change statement' is situated in a specific context.	
3. Which change? The ultimate change as envisaged by the ANG is as concrete as possible and has been formulated in a clear and unambiguous manner.	
4. Which ambition? It concerns a change that is both conceivable and desirable within a given context, bold at the same time, with a deadline for implementation beyond that of a specific programme.	
5. Schematic representation and narrative are coherent with each other.	
<b>2. ACTORS OF CHANGE</b>	
1. Who needs to change? The main actors who, according to the ANG, play a role in achieving the ultimate change within a given context have been identified, as specifically as possible. This is done on the basis of an analysis of relationships and power relations.	
2. Who will the ANG focus on? It is clear which actors the ANG will particularly focus on and with (and which not).	
3. What needs to change among the actors? It is clear how, according to the ANG, the actors can contribute to achieving the ultimate change. The ANG describes, as specifically as possible, the change in the actors themselves, which it believes is necessary and desirable.	
4. Schematic representation and narrative are coherent with each other.	
<b>3. PATHS OF CHANGE</b>	
1. How will actors change in the end? The ANG has specified for each actor how they may possibly change: the path of change and the intermediate changes have been specified. In this way, there are several paths of change with several intermediate steps.	
2. What can change? The ANG has thoroughly considered the intermediate changes. This may involve changes in relationships,	

capacity, competencies, values, attitudes, knowledge, etc. In this way, various possible types of change have been identified.	
3. How do these changes relate to each other? The ANG C makes clear how, in its view, the paths of change of various actors are interconnected and influence each other. These connections are relevant and credible.	
4. Schematic representation and narrative are coherent with each other.	
<b>4. STRATEGY OF THE ANG C AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGE</b>	
1. What will the ANG C do? It is clear how the ANG C wants to contribute to change: the interventions and activities of the ANG C are concretely defined.	
2. On which actors and paths of change will the ANG C work? It is clear how the ANG C will work (in a direct or indirect way): interventions and activities are specific and relevant to the intended actors and the desired change.	
3. It seems feasible that the ANG C will be able to achieve the changes it focuses on within the time frame of the programme.	
4. It seems realistic that the ANG C can have control or influence on the actors/changes on which it claims it wants to work (given the expertise of the ANG C, its experience and positioning with regard to the actors and within the specific context).	
5. With whom else? The ToC clearly shows with which organisations/groups the ANG C will strategically work together to make the ultimate change possible. The ANG C does not pursue change with these partners, but identifies them in order to work on actors and changes that go beyond its sphere of control and influence or to strengthen the influence of its programme. This will allow for a change of strategy if necessary (e.g. if the context changes).	
6. Schematic representation and narrative are coherent with each other.	
<b>5. ASSUMPTIONS AND CRITICAL REFLECTION</b>	
1. What frameworks for thinking about social change? The ANG C clearly explains how it thinks about social change and how that change takes place. The ToC refers to certain concepts, theories, research, values that make the desired change(s) and the paths of change as seen by the ANG C credible and plausible in general.	
2. What assumptions about relationships between changes? The ANG C explains why, in its opinion, change A will lead to change B or change ... The ANG C has also substantiated this.	



3. What hypotheses about the ANGC's own strategy and the way in which it allows for change? The ANGC explains why it thinks that its interventions/activities bring about or influence a certain change. E.g. why will activity X lead to change C?	
4. How gender specific? The ANGC has formulated clear answers to the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Do the actors need to be described in a gender-specific way?</li> <li>b. Will changes and processes of change take place in the same way among men and women (and, by extension, diverse groups)?</li> <li>c. Will certain changes have different effects on men or women?</li> <li>d. Will our strategies and interventions have a different impact on men and women?</li> </ul>	
5. What assumptions about external factors? The ANGC explicitly indicates which actors and factors in the context (outside the control of the programme) can influence the results and explains what that influence is (positive and negative).	
6. Which assumptions are difficult to substantiate and/or seem very uncertain? The ANGC identifies the hypotheses that are the most difficult to substantiate or the most uncertain and may have a major impact on the programme (both positive and negative) and considers them to be risks. These hypotheses are reflected in the programme's risk analysis and are followed up by the monitoring and evaluation system.	
7. What can we learn? Based on the ToC, the ANGC identifies specific learning questions and evaluation questions allowing to better understand how change is happening and how the ANGC can act on it. These questions are included in the monitoring and evaluation system.	
8. Schematic representation and narrative are coherent with each other.	

### 6.3. The example of Plan Belgium: formulating learning questions

Source: ACE Europe

## ToC and the determination of priority points of attention in M&E: example Plan Belgium

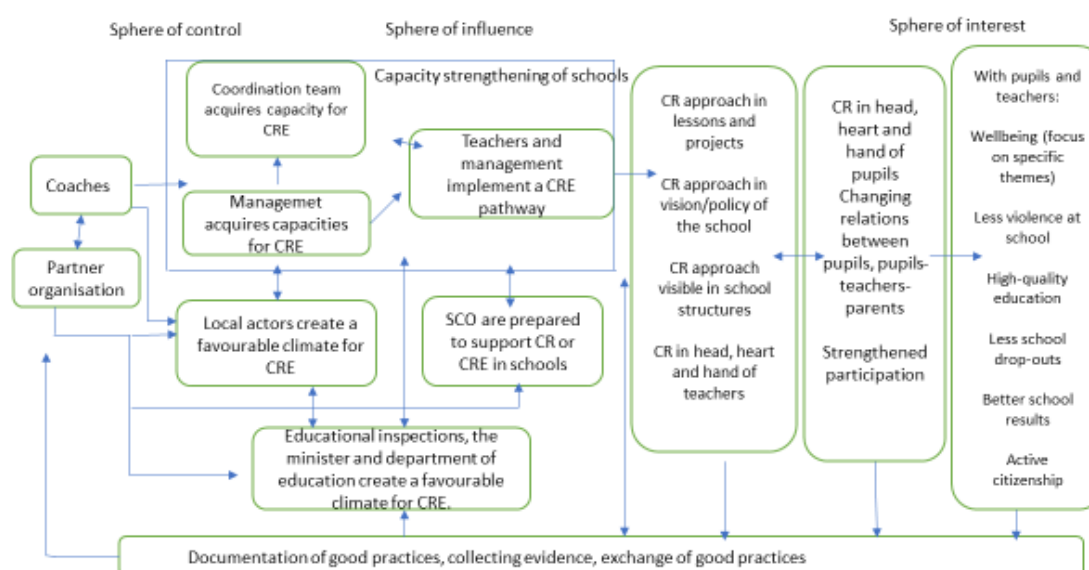
M&E manual Children's Rights schools determined

- learning questions about critical issues
- That when analysing progress reports about schools, these questions were systematically included in order to collect enough data
- That every year (or in view of the interim and final evaluation) critical issues are given specific attention to ensure that monitoring contributes to learning.

Examples of learning questions include:

- Is there a difference of approach between coaches in terms of results in schools?
- Is the behaviour and working method of the coach inspiring for teachers ('practice what you preach')?
- What are the factors that make teachers enthusiastic about children's rights?
- Do we see that a pathway – which affects a school context, practicing and providing certain methods, setting up concrete actions – also affects changes in the classroom practice of individual teachers?

## ToC and the determination of priority points of attention in M&E



Plan International Belgium

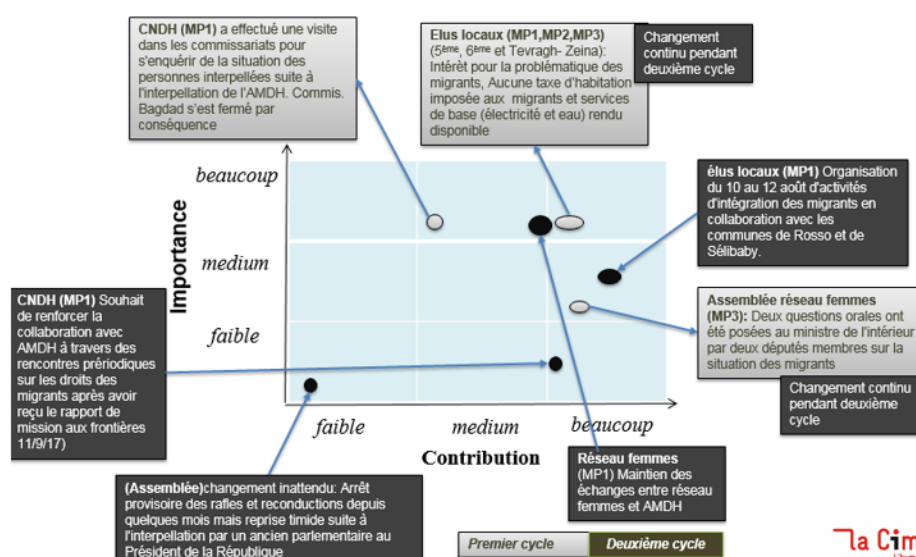
## 6.4. The example of the CIMADE project: reporting scheme and analysis frameworks

Source: Van Ongevalle J. (2017). Guide de suivi-évaluation pour le volet plaidoyer du projet Loujna - Tounkaranké.

[https://lmo.libis.be/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=LIRIAS1899382&context=L&vid=Lirias&search\\_scope=Lirias&tab=default\\_tab&lang=en-US&fromSitemap=1](https://lmo.libis.be/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=LIRIAS1899382&context=L&vid=Lirias&search_scope=Lirias&tab=default_tab&lang=en-US&fromSitemap=1)

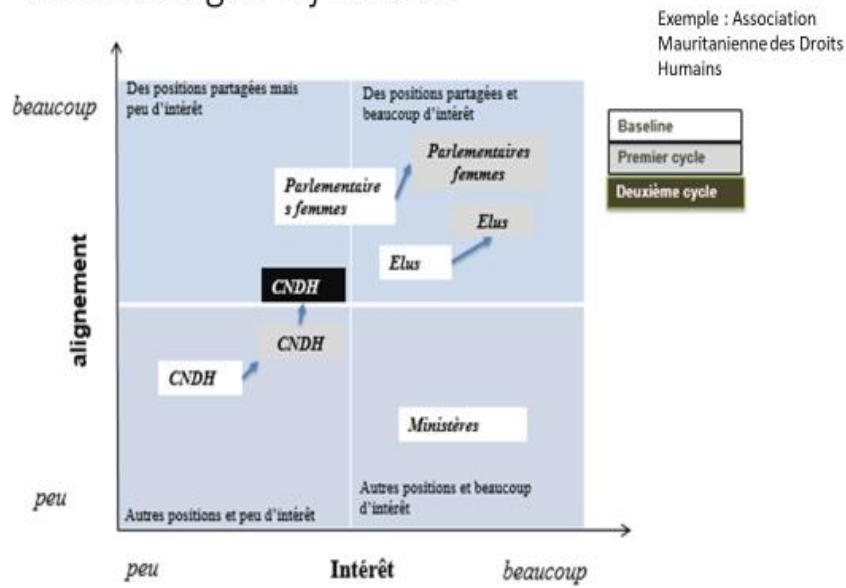
Key actor: National Human Rights Commission (CNDH)				
		Work period (from/to) April 2017 to 31/08/2017		
		Name of the people filling out the diary		
Progress markers	Remarkable facts, what happened? (who, how, what, where, when)	Contribution of your association to this change	Importance of this change	Numerical evaluation
<i>We expect to see</i>				
1. That the CNDH participates in the meeting where the conclusions of the observation mission on the Mali-Niger border will be communicated as well as in other activities organised in the project context;				4
<i>We would like to see</i>				
2. that the CNDH integrates the recommendations of the Loujna collective from the border observation reports into its annual human rights report;				
<i>We would love to see</i>				
3. that the CNDH and the advocacy committee carry out joint actions (public declarations, work meetings, conferences) towards the advocacy target groups to defend and promote the rights of migrants;				
Unexpected changes				
Factors or actors who/that contributed to or limited the achievement of progress				
Advocacy strategies that have been particularly effective or that require follow-up or corrective action during the next monitoring cycle?				
Risks				
1.No change				
2. Very little change depending on the project				
3. Significant but project-dependent change				
4. Appropriate change, not depending on the project				

### Matrix: 'contribution'



Matrix: 'contribution'

## Matrix: 'veranderingen bij actoren'



## 6.5. Suggestions for evaluation questions

DAC criteria	Suggestions for evaluation questions inspired by ToC
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are our strategies well chosen for influencing expected changes among the actors we support?</li> <li>• To what extent do we support those actors which are strategic for achieving long-term objectives?</li> <li>• To what extent are the activities we carry out coherent with the logic of the ToC?</li> </ul>
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the achieved changes worth the effort compared to the resources (how is the budget divided between the different strategies?)</li> <li>• Are certain processes of change more expensive than others?</li> <li>• Are the 'costs/bearing capacity' of certain social changes mainly borne by women or men?</li> <li>• Does the programme pay attention to the adaptation of the budget and its use in function of new realities?</li> <li>• Do most resources (HR/time) go to strategies that are most promising with a view to achieving change?</li> <li>• What is the cost of strategies and actions that are most likely to achieve change/have contributed to desired changes?</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has been our role in realising change processes (initiator, facilitator, accelerator, support, ...)?</li> <li>• What are counterforces and other factors that have influenced the change processes?</li> <li>• To what extent are we able to adapt our interventions to the ongoing change or to the process of change and/or new opportunities that arise (e.g. by adjusting strategy, developing new strategies and activities, new emphases, ...)?</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent were the interventions designed with the sustainability of social change in mind?</li> <li>• To what extent do the observed changes result (only) from the strategy/activity or also from the capacity or the will of the actors we supported?</li> <li>• To what extent can we assume that the social changes will continue after the intervention?</li> <li>• Have we succeeded in influencing changes that are essential with regard to the problem and the long-term objective? (e.g. structural changes that give pupils better access to quality global supply?)</li> </ul>
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any changes in the situation of the ultimate beneficiaries? Is there a link between identified changes and the ultimate change statement of the ToC?</li> <li>• To what extent do some intermediate changes have more weight in achieving impact?</li> </ul>

## 6.6. References and literature list

- De Reviers, B. et Jadjaj-Castro, H. (2015) *Agir pour le Changement. Guide méthodologique pour accompagner des processus de changement complexe : analyser, planifier, suivre et évaluer*. Des collections du F3E. (available at: [http://f3e.asso.fr/media/transfert/doc/guide\\_chgmt\\_f3e\\_cota\\_web.pdf](http://f3e.asso.fr/media/transfert/doc/guide_chgmt_f3e_cota_web.pdf) )

This is a guide that aims to commemorate classic development cooperation from an approach which aims for change and change processes. This guide was later used in an action-study (see the web resources) where several examples of tools and experiences can be found. Also very suitable for smaller projects and organisations.

- Klein, M (2018) [Theory of Change Quality Audit](#)

This 'Expert Lens' presents a comprehensive and concise audit of the ToC that should enable you to identify inconsistencies, gaps and weaknesses in order to refine strategies, make implicit assumptions explicit and improve the overall quality of thinking which underlies operational decisions. The audit that is presented in this 'Expert Lens' can be experienced as quite extensive and time consuming. It is up to you to decide which parts are most relevant to your organisation, and which parts you decide to skip. The audit integrates elements related to the ToC development process and the ToC as a product.

- HIVOS (2015) *Theory of Change Thinking in practice: a stepwise approach and the portal on theory of change* (available at <https://www.openupcontracting.org/assets/2017/09/Hivos-ToC-guidelines-2015.pdf>)

This guide is the result of experimenting and learning about the Theory of Change and its use in practice, which began in 2007. The guide is the main inspiration for this document! The guide excels in asking critical questions and supporting the organisation of workshops. Part of the guide introduces the ToC and its main features. A second, very practical part includes a step-by-step approach to guide you through the development of a ToC, with specific tools for each step. The guide also refers to other tools, sources and sites where you can find more information about the ToC.

- Rogers P (2014) [Theory of Change](#). Methodological Briefs Impact Evaluation No. 2. UNICEF. Available at: [https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Dokumente/Evaluierung/Theory\\_of\\_Change/UNICEF\\_Theory\\_of\\_change.pdf](https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Evaluierung/Theory_of_Change/UNICEF_Theory_of_change.pdf)

This guide, written by Patricia Rogers for UNICEF, examines the use of the ToC in the context of impact assessment. It shows how the ToC can be useful to determine what data needs to be collected and how it needs to be analysed. It also emphasises the use of the TOC as a reporting framework.

- Stein, D., & Valters, C. (2012). [Understanding Theory in Change in International Development](#). The Asia Foundation. Available at: <https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/stein.pdf>

The study highlights a number of key points concerning the current understanding of ToC and invites a constructive and critical discussion on the concept and practical application of this theory. The focus is on international development projects. Four main objectives of the ToC are identified: 1) strategic planning, 2) description, 3) monitoring & evaluation and 4) learning.

- UNDG (2017) *Theory of Change - UNDAF Companion Guidance*, UNDG. Available at: <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/theory-change-undaf-companion-guidance> .

The purpose of this accompanying guide is to provide technical and practical guidance for the development of change theory as an integral part of the United Nations (the UNDAF – Development Assistance Framework). The note outlines the method used to develop a change theory. A step-by-step approach is also proposed, describing each of the key steps in the process in more detail. It stresses the need to validate the theory of change, including the use of a quality assurance checklist. Finally, it provides links to useful tools and references.

- Valters C (2015) *Theories of Change: Time for a radical approach to learning in development*. ODI. Available at: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9835.pdf>

This document describes the different ways in which the approaches of the ToC are understood. It takes the main findings of recent research a step further by describing and motivating four basic principles in the use of a ToC, coupled with a more in-depth analysis of the development sector. The document highlights some examples of the organisational use of the ToC, each of which in turn tries to respond to the main criticisms of the ToC approach. It also analyses the possibilities to promote these principles in the light of the ‘results agenda’.

- VLIR-UOS Guide for the formulation of projects (s.d.). Available at: <https://cdn.webdoos.io/vliruos/80e79bb70ace1eea589d7f501541e3bc.pdf> .

A strong guide with many examples that also explicitly examines how a ToC and logical framework can be connected. Aimed at universities and setting up university cooperation projects. Also includes a step-by-step plan.

- Vogel I (2012) *Review of the use of ‘Theory of Change’ in international development*. Review Report for DFID.

This report gives a good overview of what exists in the field of ToC. The consultant interviewed 25 different development organisations. Concrete examples are given (e.g. from Congo and Tanzania). The author emphasises common concepts between the ToC and other project methodologies. You will also find a set of recommendations and guiding principles for the implementation of a ToC.

- Vogel, I (s.d.) *ESPA guide to working with Theory of Change*. Available at: <https://www.espa.ac.uk/files/espa/ESPA-Theory-of-Change-Manual-FINAL.pdf>

This guide is intended for research projects in the area of ecosystem services for poverty reduction (ESPA). It is intended to support principal investigators and research teams who want to use a Theory of Change to develop their impact trajectories and strategies. It may also be useful for other research programmes with an approach similar to ESPA. The guide also pays attention to uptake of research projects. This guide is clearly elaborated with several steps.

**Websites:**

- <https://f3e.asso.fr/boite-a-outils/planification-strategique-des-aoc/>

This website contains a toolbox. In line with the publication of F3E. (See De Reviers in the literature list).

- <http://www.theoryofchange.org/> (initiated by Act 4 Knowledge in collaboration with the Aspen Institute, they have a number of examples that have been elaborated step by step and also a tool for visualising) – for visualising, see also: <http://www.wikichange.co/>

A step-by-step approach: the basics!

- <http://www.managingforimpact.org/tool/theory-change>, based on experience of HIVOS, portal hosted by CDI Wageningen

Portal that links up with the HIVOS guide that is also the inspiration for this document. Access to evaluations and articles on the use of the ToC.

- <https://www.betterevaluation.org>

A practical and very informative website, first aid with all questions concerning evaluation (types, approach, methods, experiences, etc.). The website pays a lot of attention to approaches that are in line with the ToC. Those who are interested in software tools to support the visual representation of a ToC can find information about this (search for 'software').



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