Theory of Change: Roadmap to Impact

Nonprofit Partners Conference 2019
Presented by: Susie Pratt, Pratt Richards Group

October 5, 2019
The Challenge: We Make Big Claims
(especially in our grant proposals)

IF....

We run an OST program....
We advocate for women’s rights....
We provide legal services....

THEN

Kids will graduate from college.
Women will be safe and secure.
Disadvantaged youth will have a bright future.
What is your If/Then Statement?
If/Then: The Evaluation Problem

The BIG GAP BETWEEN

Good for Elevator Speeches
BUT Not for Evaluation
Solution: Create a Logic Model or Theory of Change

A Nuanced If/Then Statement

- Strategies/Activities
- Outcomes
- Impact
Some Definitions

“A Theory of Change is...an analysis of the causal chain that links your [programmatic] interventions to the goals you want to achieve.”

- Money Well Spent, Brest and Harvey 2008

“A Theory of Change reflects an organization’s belief about how impact happens.”

- The Bridgespan Group
Key Benefits for Evaluation (and Planning!)

**STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT**
Discover whether your strategies and activities are aligned with your hoped-for impact.

**REALISTIC MEASUREMENT**
Better understand your impact – what you can realistically accomplish and claim credit for.

**LEARNING & GROWTH**
Tool for both planning & evaluation work, enables your organization to learn and improve.
ToC Design: Building Backwards

IMPACT
What does success look like? What is your vision?

OUTCOMES
What has to happen before this can happen?

STRATEGIES
What are the core strategies, activities, and values?
Pratt Richards Group Model

If we...

Strategies & Activities

Planning: Focus is Here

Then...

Immediate Outcomes

Engagement

Which will lead to...

Intermediate Outcomes

Behavior
Attitude
Skills
Knowledge

Community or social change

Long-term Impact

Vision of Success
Youth Development Program ToC

**STRATEGIES**

- Create a family atmosphere where youth are personally greeted and welcomed; they feel a sense of belonging and as if our organization is their "second home".
- Employ high quality staff who act as caregivers, role models and mentors, providing: Care, support, and advice; Models of positive communication and relationship building; Case management for assessing behavioral, educational and social development; Validation for strengths, progress and accomplishments; Encouragement to set goals, be challenged, rise to their potential.
- Provide needed opportunities and assistance in a holistic way – programming that helps youth gain skills in fun, engaging ways in 5 core areas: Character and leadership, Education and career, Health and life skills, Arts, and Fitness and Sports.
- Consistently communicate with parents and teachers to discuss youth’s development.
- Provide quality referrals for youth and their families to other agencies that supplement our work.
- Partner with community groups and schools to support youth; act as a voice for change within our communities.
- Follow up with alumnae or individuals who have stopped attending the clubs.

**THEN...**

- **Youth in the programs will be:**
  - Safe (off the streets) and engaged in programs, as evidenced by high attendance and retention rates.
  - Maintaining healthy relationships with their peers and caring adults by demonstrating early changes in attitudes and behaviors, including:
    - Respecting and tolerating others (empathy)
    - Fostering self-reliance and self-respect
    - Developing caring and social behaviors
    - Making healthy choices (health and social situations)
    - Avoiding risks
  - Showing progress in the acquisition of important life skills, including:
    - Critical thinking
    - Leadership
    - Communication
    - Education and career readiness

**WHICH WILL LEAD TO...**

- **Youth in the programs who are:**
  - Leaders - civically engaged and positively influencing others at the clubs, in their families, and in the community.
  - Feeling hopeful about the future, and aware of/capable of accessing opportunities available to them.
  - Able to articulate short and long-term goals for themselves.
  - Self-confident, self-reliant, and proud of their accomplishments.
  - Life-long learners.
  - Making healthy choices, and encouraging their friends and families to do the same.

**IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES**

**INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES**

**LONGER-TERM IMPACT**

- Young people who need us most, particularly those in most challenged neighborhoods, will reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens.

**IF WE ...**

- Employ high quality staff who act as caregivers, role models and mentors, providing: Care, support, and advice; Models of positive communication and relationship building; Case management for assessing behavioral, educational and social development; Validation for strengths, progress and accomplishments; Encouragement to set goals, be challenged, rise to their potential.
- Provide needed opportunities and assistance in a holistic way – programming that helps youth gain skills in fun, engaging ways in 5 core areas: Character and leadership, Education and career, Health and life skills, Arts, and Fitness and Sports.
- Consistently communicate with parents and teachers to discuss youth’s development.
- Provide quality referrals for youth and their families to other agencies that supplement our work.
- Partner with community groups and schools to support youth; act as a voice for change within our communities.
- Follow up with alumnae or individuals who have stopped attending the clubs.
Logic Models
(Translating from ToC)
Thank You!

Susie Quern Pratt & Jenny Ellis Richards
Principals, Pratt Richards Group
www.pratrichardsgroup.com
Theory of Change... Reconstructed

Kate Bousum, CFRE
Director of Advancement at Child’s Voice
WSPN President 2019-2020

Photo credit: Microsoft Office Creative Commons
From Classroom to Action

How do we show our success?
What is our Impact?
How are we ‘proving the pudding’?
Why do this?

Program successes
Opportunities to better serve students/families
Grant requests
Grant reports
Improving data gathered / Data projects
Where to Start?

Such a big concept, so...
We started with a single project/program.

Ongoing Process

Quick overview of our Program

Photo credit: Microsoft Office Creative Commons
Begin at the Very Beginning...

Leadership Buy-in

Part of the Program’s Goals

Takes Time

Photo credit: Microsoft Office Creative Commons
Challenges?

Perception of the process/effort
How to do it?
How much extra work will this be?
Who is going to do it?
What if we don’t like the results?
What Happened?

1) What does this program do?
2) Now, how do we measure that?
What Does This Program Do?

Why? Why? Why?

Avoid jargon and alphabet soup

Break down your guides that you already have!

Case statement,

Mission,

Strategic plan
How Do You Measure That?

What processes are already in place?

Define what needs to be measured based on objectives/goals.

Can anything be double-counted?

Who else might have this data?

Make sure you can translate the measurements too.
The Technical

Process

Data gathering

Technology’s Role & Impact

Finding Support

Photo credit: Microsoft Office
Where We’re At...

Showcasing successes that you know were there!

Improved ease of reporting and increased funding!

Still evolving...

Updates to demographic form
Updates to parent needs
Additional testing
Thank you!

Kate Bousum

kbousum@childsvoice.org

(630) 595-8200 x1051

Linked In

Twitter - @katebousum