

ACTIONABLE IMPACT MANAGEMENT

AIM VOLUME ONE | **GROUNDWORK** | ACTIVITY GUIDE

A FRAMEWORK FOR...
SOCIAL IMPACT STRATEGY,
MEASUREMENT, &
DEMONSTRATION

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FIRST OF A 4-PART SERIES OF EBOOKS,
ACTIONABLE IMPACT MANAGEMENT (AIM) VOLUME ONE: GROUNDWORK
IS DESIGNED TO HELP YOUR ORGANIZATION MAP OUT THE FOUNDATIONAL
ELEMENTS OF YOUR IMPACT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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ACTIONABLE IMPACT MANAGEMENT

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FRAMEWORK

What it is

Actionable Impact Management (AIM) is designed to assist in defining an internal organizational framework. This is executed by establishing an enduring impact measurement process which is primarily data and outcome oriented. AIM's objective is to outline a roadmap for your organization to follow in the hopes of reaching a point where you are able to more accurately and effectively communicate your impact to multiple stakeholders.

Impact Management refers to an organization's ability to define an impact framework that is practical and enduring and translate insights through effective communication on impact via your website, reports, content generation, etc.

This guide is designed for functionality and accessibility of content, complete with instruction and activities to work through the process. The thoughtful introspection required by 'Volume One: Groundwork' makes it the most time intensive of the AIM series. Groundwork lays the infrastructure for all subsequent impact measurement practices.

What it isn't

Actionable Impact Management is not intended for grant management or the monitoring of activities. This guide is not a deep-dive into the theoretical considerations of the processes but will reference additional resources for those that want to gain more substantial insights into any of the topic areas. Each organization is unique in its own entity, therefore AIM is not intended to serve as a one-size-fits-all practice.

ACTIONABLE IMPACT MANAGEMENT

FRAMEWORK STEPS

VOL. 1 GROUNDWORK

VISION, MISSION, & GOALS
PROGRAM STRUCTURE
THEORY OF CHANGE
MANAGING CHANGE

VOL. 2 METRICS

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS
STANDARD METRICS ALIGNMENT
METRICS DATA PIPELINE + TOOLS

VOL. 3 DATA

DATA CAPACITY
DATA TOOLS
DATA STRATEGY

VOL. 4 COMMUNICATION

EVALUATION
STORYTELLING APPROACH
QUALITY PRINCIPLES
WHAT TO INCLUDE IN AN IMPACT REPORT
REACHING AUDIENCE

VOL 1 | GROUNDWORK IN THIS VOLUME



VISION, MISSION, & GOALS

OVERVIEW

VISION OVERVIEW + ACTIVITY

MISSION OVERVIEW + ACTIVITY

GOALS OVERVIEW + ACTIVITY



PROGRAM STRUCTURE

OVERVIEW

ACTIVITY



THEORY OF CHANGE

OVERVIEW

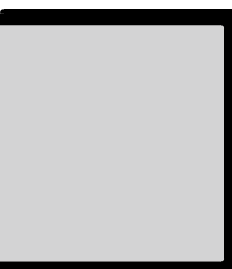
ACTIVITY

TEMPLATE



MANAGING CHANGE

OVERVIEW



GLOSSARY

GROUNDWORK

We have entered a new era of impact reporting; one in which social interventions are held to a new, higher standard of impact assessment. Stay ahead of this wave by utilizing existing technology to equip you with the tools you need to collect, assess, and demonstrate your impact. Volumes 2-4 are dedicated to the technicalities of this process, however, the key to a successful impact framework is a solid foundation. This first Volume, Groundwork, is about deciding what data makes the most sense for you to collect, assess, and demonstrate.

Although the groundwork phase is the most demanding and time intensive of the AIM volumes, it is the most insightful and most importantly is the most fun.

We hope you enjoy it, but mostly, we hope it helps to lay a path for your organization to enter this new era as a role model for others. This is a deeply personal exercise which makes it the most unique and serves as a compass to guide you through AIM's following steps.

If you have questions, concerns, or insights as you work through the activities in this guide, we would be happy to help. Simply send your messages to hetal@sopact.com or unmesh@sopact.com

Look out for new resources at SoPact (<https://www.sopact.com>)

Impact Perspectives

Learn about major trends in social impact management, topics in social impact framework, social impact reporting and data management in mission-driven organizations.

VISION, MISSION, & GOALS

Vision, Mission, & Goals statements will serve as a guide in all future impact-defining activities. These are the statements you turn to when you get stuck. It is important to make sure that these statements are always pertinent to your organization.

i. Vision Statement

Start with the Vision statement. Close your eyes and imagine that your organization is successful beyond your wildest dreams. What does that world look like? The Vision statement paints a picture of the ideal world your organization is working towards.

ii. Mission Statement

Once the Vision statement is defined, you are ready to tackle the Mission statement, which answers for how your organization is working towards that Vision. If the Vision statement paints a picture of the future your organization works toward, the Mission statement is a clear definition of your organization's activities.

iii. Goals

Goals are a series of milestones that your organization is working towards through your Mission to achieve the Vision statement you've crafted.

REALITY CHECK: Not Just for your 'About Us' page.

These statements are not just nice looking statements on your website, but serious and useful tools. In fact, they will serve as reference points in subsequent steps.

VISION, MISSION, & GOALS: EXAMPLES

Here are examples of well-curated Vision, Mission, and Goals by the Grameen Bank. The Bank was founded in 1983 by Dr. Muhamad Yunus to address poverty by providing banking services and access to credit for the poor. [The following Vision and Mission were taken from the 2014 Annual Report.](#)

i. Vision Statement

"Banking for the poor"

[More examples of Vision Statements](#)

ii. Mission Statement

"By providing comprehensive financial services, empowering the poor to realize their potential and break out of the vicious cycle of poverty."

[More examples of Mission Statements](#)

The following list of goals are examples of what the Bank's goals could be, but are not official goals of the Bank.

iii. Goals

Goal: Bank Head Quarters in an accessible neighborhood of Dhaka

Goal: All Bengalis have the opportunity to access formal credit

Goal: Develop a model that can be customized for new regions and countries

Goal: Promote concept of Social Business worldwide

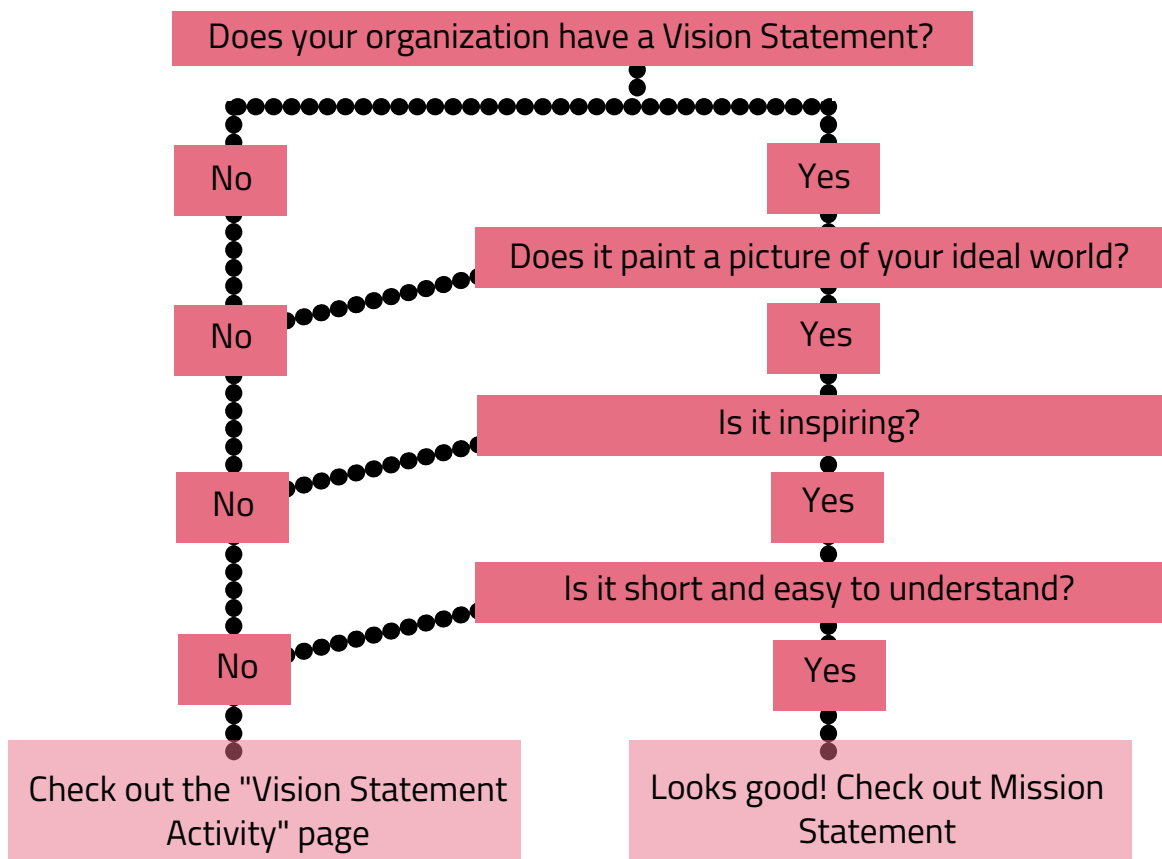
i. VISION STATEMENT

A Vision Statement is the cornerstone of an organization. It is the vision of the world that would exist if your organization's efforts were 100 percent successful.

Your Vision Statement is a powerful tool to draw people in. It should...

- be short, concise and, therefore, easy to understand
- be visual and paint a picture of your organization's idea of a perfect world
- be inspiring and positive - a rallying cry people want to be a part of
- be constant. A Vision Statement is enduring and is unlikely to change

Use the question test below to determine if your Vision Statement needs revision:



i. VISION STATEMENT ACTIVITY

This activity maps out the four steps your organization can take to create an enduring Vision Statement. Each step is designed to take place on different days.

STAFF	As many as possible.
MATERIALS	Whiteboard, paper, post-it notes, etc.
TIME	30 - 45 minutes per step
OUTCOME	An inspiring Vision Statement that paints a picture of the idyllic world your organization seeks to create.

Step One | Brainstorm

Be sure to involve key stakeholders. What is the vision for the organization? Be sure the Statements you come up with follow the guidelines on the previous page.

Step Two | Pick the Top 3

Aggregate the suggested Vision statements from the Brainstorming session and narrow them down to three.

Step Three | Test

Ask people you know to read each option then ask, "What does it communicate to you?" ● "Do you feel like it's something you want to be a part of?" ● "Does it trigger any negative reactions?"

Step Four | Final Selection

Review findings and choose a Vision Statement.

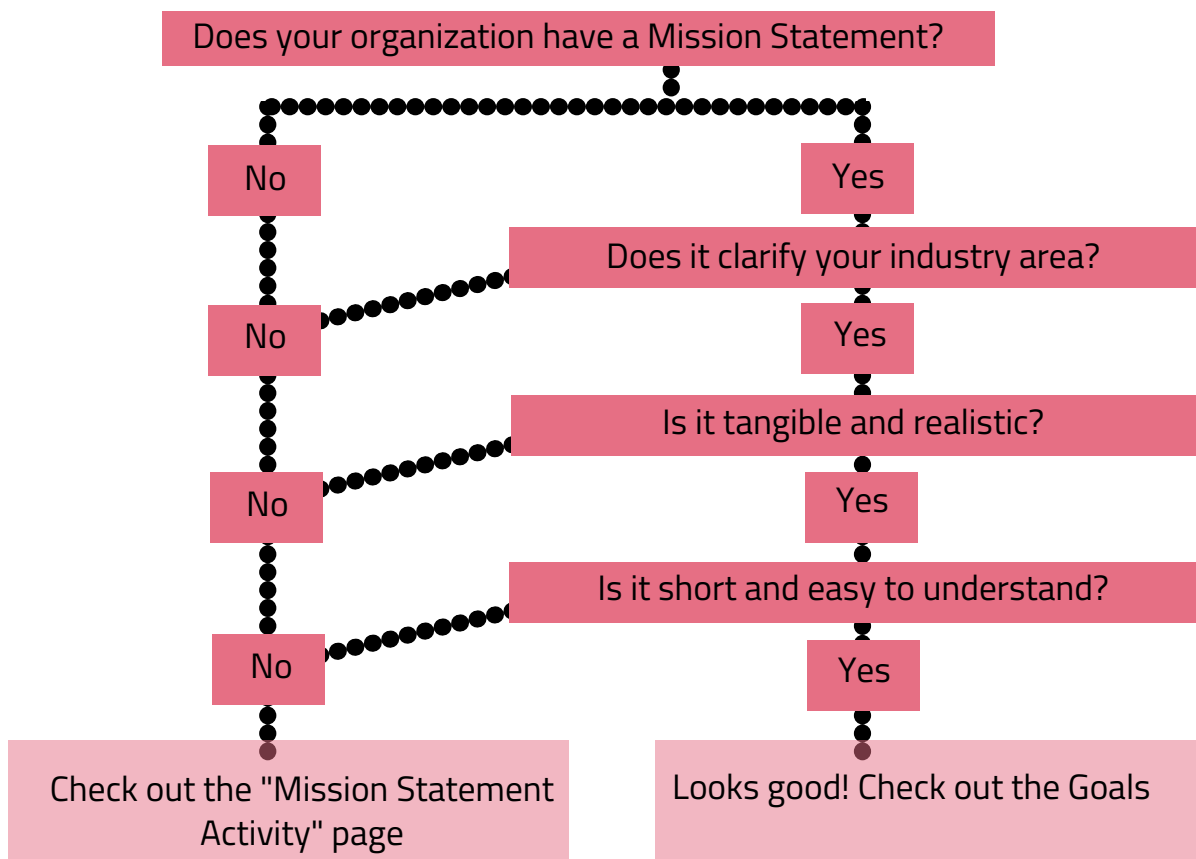
ii. MISSION STATEMENT

A Mission statement is the 'how.' How your organization contributes to achieving the VISION you just outlined - the industry in which you work (for example, healthcare services). If your industry of work changes, then your mission will need to reflect that modification. Like your vision statement, it should be clear, concise, and to the point.

Your Mission Statement identifies the industry in which you work. It should...

- be short, concise and, therefore, easy to understand
- clearly define your organization's industry (path/approach)
- be consistent with the Vision Statement

Use the question test below to determine if your Mission Statement needs revision:



ii. MISSION STATEMENT ACTIVITY

This activity maps out the four steps your organization can take to create a clear and unifying Mission Statement. Each step is designed to take place on different days.

STAFF	Staff representing various departments including strategy and program implementation.
MATERIALS	Whiteboard, paper, post-it notes, etc.
TIME	30 - 45 minutes per step
OUTCOME	A focused Mission that is representative of the industry in which your organization's activities operate within.

Step One | Scope

Identify the scope of your organization's industry that you work in (i.e. banking, education, disaster relief, etc.). Next, identify who/what your organization is serving (i.e. students, environment, immigrants, faith communities, etc.). This should include the geographical location of your beneficiaries/operations.

Step Two | Brainstorm

Once the scope is clearly defined, begin to shape a clear and concise statement. Come up with three potential variations.

Step Three | Test

Take the three options and run it by a representative sample, if not the entire staff. Together, select the Mission Statement.

Step Four | Final Selection

Review findings and choose a Mission Statement.

iii. GOALS

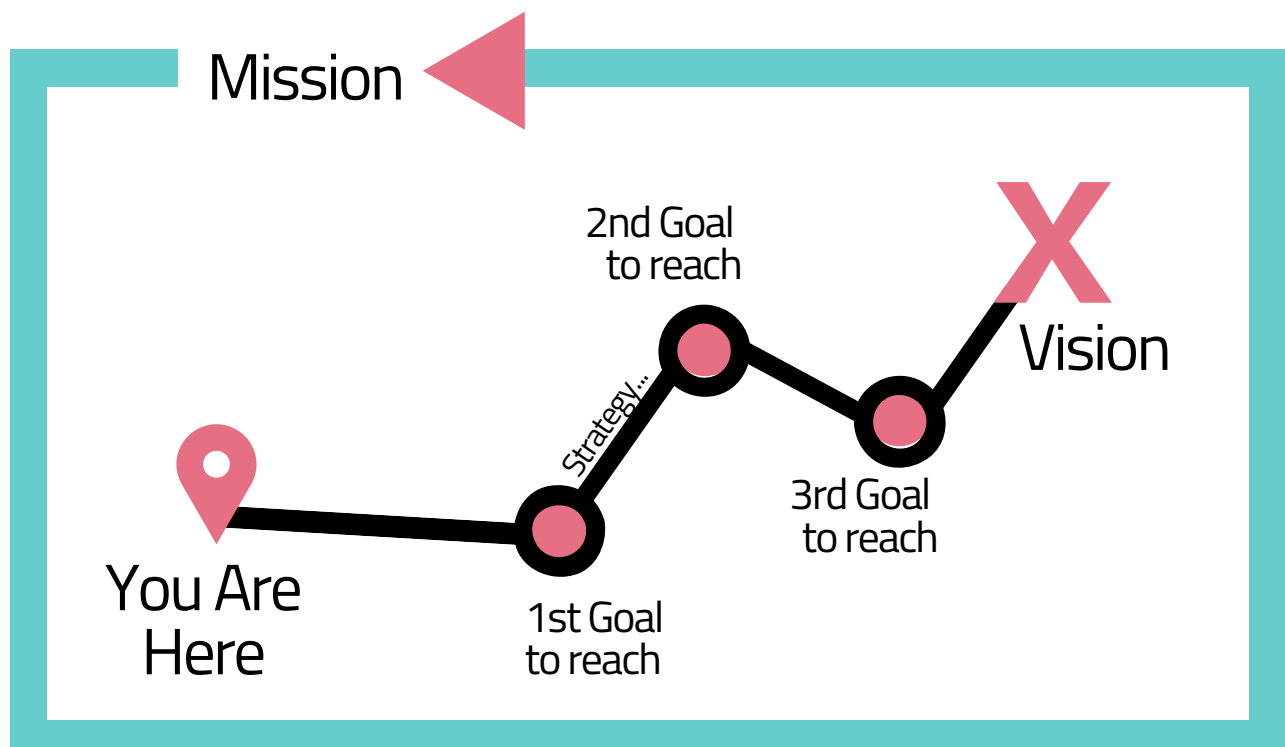
When goals are clear and easy to understand, they are powerful tools that align every area and every individual within your organization towards a common Vision. Familiarity and understanding of the big picture empowers individuals within the organization to recognize the relevance of their work to the organization's goal. This serves as a source of motivation for individuals and also enables the organization to achieve positive impact.

Your Goals unite the efforts of your organization.

They should be S.M.A.R.T....

- Specific: define What, Why, and How
- Measurable: with a way to know if the goal has been achieved or not
- Achievable: though challenging, goals should be realistic
- Relevant: pertinent to your Vision and Mission
- Time-Bound: a sequence of chronological achievements, Goals are linked to specific timelines

METAPHORICAL MAP OF VISION, MISSION, & GOALS



iii. GOALS ACTIVITY

This activity maps out the four steps your organization can take to create Goals that are easy to understand.

STAFF	Representatives from your organization's various departments (i.e. leadership, programs, etc.).
MATERIALS	Whiteboard, paper, post-it notes, etc.
TIME	30 - 45 minutes per Step
OUTCOME	A focused Mission that is representative of the industry in which your organization operations.

Step One | Strategy

Agree upon the current strategy. How are you going to go about your Mission in order to achieve the Vision?

Step Two | Milestones

Lay out a roadmap for your strategy. What are some of the milestones that your organization can work towards together?

Step Three | Clean-Up

Clean-up your milestones so that they are clear and concise. Aim for three goals, but depending on the complexity of your programs, you may have more.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The 'Program Structure' refers to your organization's internal hierarchy of activities and impact efforts. The two-layer structure includes your programs (or initiatives) in layer one and the associated goals of those programs in the second layer.

Programs

Programs refer to your organization's focus areas.

If your organization is broad in scope, your 'Programs' might be "Higher Education," "Health and Wellness," "Financial Inclusion," "Organizational Capacity Building," etc.

If your organization has a narrow scope, maybe you work with at-risk youth for college and career readiness, then break it down a step further. What are the different ways you achieve this? Maybe your programs include "Testing," and "Internships," and so on.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the intended results for each program.

REAL TALK: Not as Easy as it Sounds.

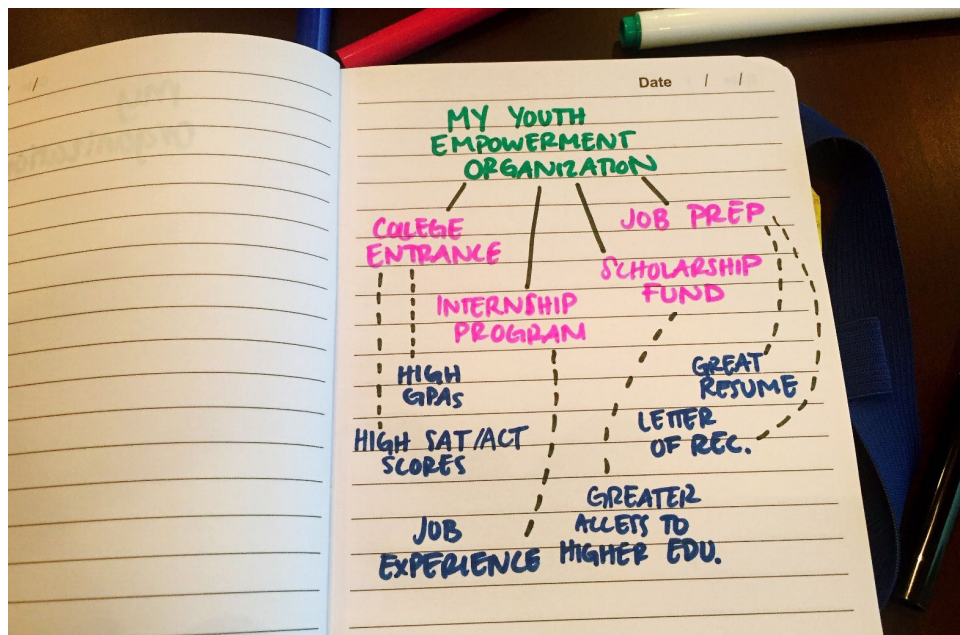
This concept sounds simple. Do not be fooled. Many organizations have gotten stumped by this section. Don't be alarmed if you find yourself in a similar situation. Glance back at your Vision, Mission, and Goals for inspiration if you do get stuck. For example, a community organization that funds local nonprofits across a wide spectrum of issue areas kept trying to fit its programs in categories like "Education," but kept ending up with way too many programs. They revisited their Mission statement and realized the important factor of their work is in capacity building of their community nonprofits. Problem solved.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE ACTIVITY

This activity maps out your organization's program structure. All you need to do is grab some post-it notes or some paper, and follow the structure below.

STAFF	Staff who are well acquainted with programs.
MATERIALS	Whiteboard, paper, post-it notes, etc.
TIME	30 - 45 minutes per step
OUTCOME	A focused Mission that is representative of the industry in which your organization operates.

Put your organization's name at the top, next list your programs and then finish it up with the outcomes of each program.

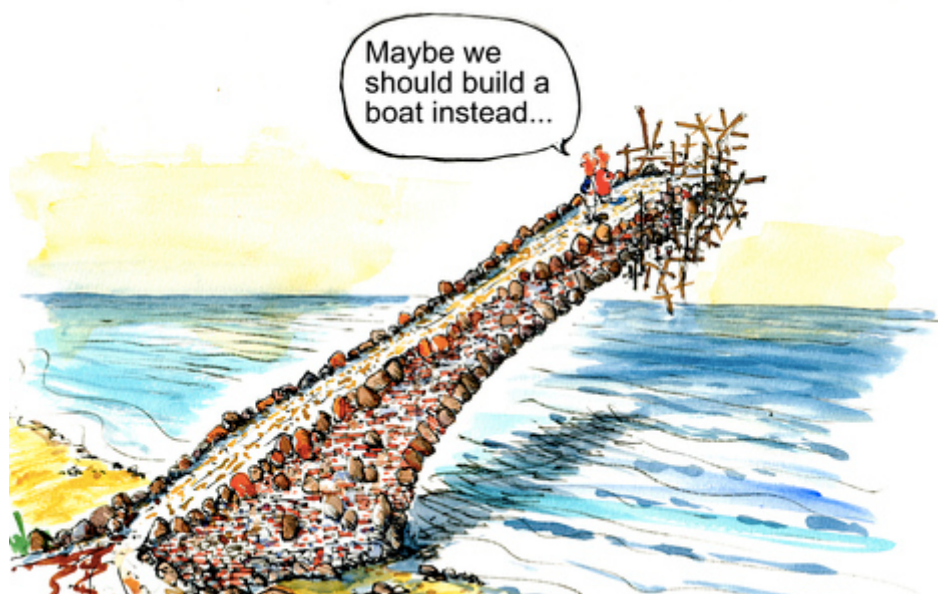


THEORY OF CHANGE

The Theory of Change (ToC) documents the change (impact) that you are seeking for both accountability and internal awareness of potential organizational challenges. In the ToC, the primary challenges indicated are your underlying assumptions.

An assumption (no matter how strongly you believe it to be true) is, after all, an assumption. Woven into the fabric of every Theory of Change is at least one grand assumption. For example, that providing free shoes improves the overall quality of life. As we saw with [Toms Shoes](#), an assumption that is not thoroughly explored can lead to negative consequences. In this case, in-kind donations replaced local markets and hurt the economy of the community served. A thoughtful and intentional Theory of Change can help mitigate negative unintended consequences like this.

Essentially, the intent of this exercise is to understand the long term goal, and map backward in a way that irons through details. By doing this, you might uncover gaps or potentially at-risk assumptions. You can learn more about Theory of Change [here](#).



THEORY OF CHANGE

When researching Theory of Change you will quickly realize how complex it is. Mapping out the long-term path you intend to take in such a way that you surface the hidden assumptions is no easy task. There are hundreds of different [examples](#) of ToCs to build from along with thoughtfully constructed [templates](#).

Some organizations get creative in how they visualize their ToC. However your approach, it's important to remember that the ToC serves an important purpose: to help keep you from making harmful mistakes. Additionally, the outcomes and outputs outlined in the document will be useful in 'Volume Two: Metrics.' To help keep it organized and clear so that you can refer later, we've developed a template that you will find in the activity portion of this section.

Each step builds on the last

You might have noticed, but each step is designed to inform the next. Skipping steps might lead to inconsistencies in the impact measurement strategy you are designing.



THEORY OF CHANGE ACTIVITY

The following Theory of Change (ToC) template is designed to build upon the program structure you just created. The outcomes and outputs option will also be important later for identifying important metrics.

STAFF	Staff who are well acquainted with programs.
MATERIALS	Whiteboard, paper, post-it notes, etc.
TIME	30 - 45 minutes per step
OUTCOME	A focused ToC that shows the logical connection between your program inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes your organization seeks to create.

- 1 Revisit your Program Structure. Order your programs from most to least important. You will begin with those that are at the top of the list.
- 2 Take the first program and fill it into box #1 in the following ToC template.
- 3 Choose one of the program's listed outcomes and fill it into box #2.
- 4 Fill out each of the boxes as they are numbered.

NOTE: The number of outputs varies depending on the program. Cover the most important outputs and try to not get too bogged down in details.

THEORY OF CHANGE ACTIVITY

Go ahead and familiarize yourself with the terms you will see in the Theory of Change template.

Programs

Programs refer to your organization's focus areas. You already outlined your programs in the previous section, Program Structure.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the intended humanitarian impact results for each program. You already outlined and organized your outcomes by their affiliated program in the previous section.

Outputs

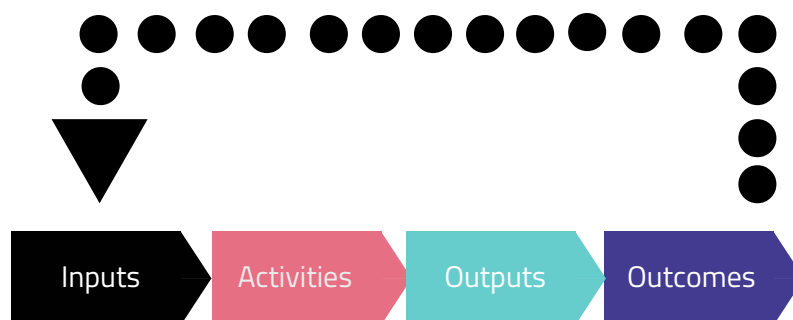
Outputs outline who is affected and what is produced. Outputs are necessary for achieving a given outcome. Think of them sort of as indicators that the outcome is on track to being achieved.

Activities

What activities need to take place in order for each output to happen?

Inputs

Inputs refer to the resources or investments needed to ensure that the activities take place.



THEORY OF CHANGE TEMPLATE

This ToC template was created by SoPact and Asia Pacific Social Impact Center as a hybrid of other ToC templates both parties have used in the past. It is designed for simplicity while maintaining the complexity of the ToC purpose of outlining the empirical basis of any social intervention.

1a. Program

1b. Outcome

1c. Why is this Outcome important to your Vision?

1d. How does this Outcome fulfill your Mission?

2a. Output One

2c. Activities

2e. Inputs

2b. Why will this output create the outcome (box 1b)?

2d. Why are these activities needed for output one?

2f. Why are these inputs needed for the activities?

3a. Output Two

3c. Activities

3e. Inputs

3b. Why will this output create the outcome (box 1b)?

3d. Why are these activities needed for output two?

3f. Why are these inputs needed for the activities?

4a. Output Three

4c. Activities

4e. Inputs

4b. Why will this output create the outcome (box 1b)?

4d. Why are these activities needed for output three?

4f. Why are these inputs needed for the activities?

5a. Output Four

5c. Activities

5e. Inputs

5b. Why will this output create the outcome (box 1b)?

5d. Why are these activities needed for output four?

5f. Why are these inputs needed for the activities?

MANAGING CHANGE

The world we are moving into is one that is not accepting the notion that all good efforts lead to good impact. Although this new ideology challenges our organizations, efforts, and projects, it brings with it accountability, transparency, and reform. If we are prepared, we can be a part of the shaping of this new era. Before moving forward, be sure to gain the trust and backing of your stakeholders. Be sure that there is collective organizational intention to take the activities in this eBook seriously. You will need to work together – from the Executive Director to the program coordinators to the interns to the Board.

Fair warning, once you have completed your new impact measurement strategy and you are ready to implement it in your organization, you might find some resistance from your colleagues. This is natural; people have a natural fear of change. Breaking the status quo brings uncertainty and anxiety.

Before you embark on this journey to improve your impact measurement strategy, know that it will require change...in your organization's mindset, in your operations, maybe even in your tools and technology. But if you succeed to engage your organization in this journey, the results will be amazing.

REAL TALK: Not as Easy as it Sounds.

If your organization is small, onboarding an intern to facilitate the project might be a good idea. It is important to know that this position is one of facilitation and your staff's presence and time will still be required. If your organization is a bit larger, hiring a consultant can bring the credibility you need to face the perspectives around the table. Your staff's presence will still be required, but the process will be tracked, well-documented, and well-communicated to all involved.

MANAGING CHANGE

Here are some tips to achieve the level of involvement that you require in order for your organization to succeed.

INVOLVE KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Invite key stakeholders to be part of the preparation, especially those affected by or driving the changes, i.e. leadership, program managers, etc.

COMMUNICATE INTENT

Communicate your intent to implement or improve the impact measurement strategy. In the beginning, this might be done through information sessions open to anyone interested in learning more about the new impact measurement process. Remember that people are motivated by the outcome. Be sure to expose the need for change to the whole organization and clearly describe how the change will benefit each area of the organization.

BREAK IT DOWN

Don't try to boil the ocean – start small. A small change is easier to control and observe the results. As you go along, small wins will motivate staff. In this case, you might go by Volumes: The Actionable Impact Management framework is already broken into 4 steps (Groundwork; Metrics; Data; Impact Report) that might serve as a reasonable guideline for your organization's bite-sized chunks.

IDENTIFY KEY AGENTS OF CHANGE

Identify the early adopters within the different departments – the individuals that seem most excited about the potential change and who want to be part of it. Next, provide those individuals with training so that they are well-versed in the objectives and goals along with the methodologies and tools that will be used to apply them. Throughout the process, these are the individuals you will want to keep informed and updated. They will help keep everyone else updated as well. Be sure to listen to their feedback. All this feedback will help you make small adjustments to make the change smoother.

REINFORCEMENT

Recognize those making the effort to adopt the new process. Show how the benefits are starting to happen. Communicate how this new impact strategy is helping your organization, either in terms of efficiency, effectiveness or any other element that is relevant to your organization's culture. Try to adapt the implementation process around the organic inclinations of those involved.

GLOSSARY

IMPACT

The intended and unintended long-term consequences (both positive and negative) of a program. It can be difficult to ascertain the how much of this systemic impact is attributable to one program since several other programs in and out of your organization can contribute to the same impact in positive and negative ways. An example of an impact would be reduced child mortality rates.

EXAMPLE: In the case of a Safe Water project, an increase in the number of households using treated water would directly impact on fewer cases of people suffering from diarrhea, meaning that there will be a reduced number of lost man-hours. This has a direct impact on poverty reduction. Also, the number of children suffering from diarrhea may reduce, meaning that the cases of child deaths are reduced.

METRIC

A defined system or standard of measurement to track progress of change by your organization. In the impact space there are standard metrics and custom metrics. Standards are written by research and evaluation organizations and generally exist around focus areas or organization type. Custom metrics are created by an organization and are designed around their use case.

BENCHMARK DATA

Data that is used to compare your program to other settings. This could be similar interventions in different places, or to the population at large (e.g. wanting to bring educational attainment of a minority population up to the national average)

BASELINE DATA

Data that is collected at the beginning of a project to establish the current status of a population before an intervention is rolled out. Without a baseline, it's not possible to know what the impact of the intervention is!

GLOSSARY

THEORY OF CHANGE

A map defines long-term impact a program seeks to deliver the logical relationship between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact. This is created by working backward from the desired impact to identify necessary preconditions. A good theory of change should be plausible, feasible and testable.

Theory of Change includes Inputs, Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes:

INPUT

What we use in the project to implement it. In any project, inputs would include things like human resource (personnel), financial capital, machinery such as vehicles, and equipment such as whiteboards and computers. Inputs ensure that it is possible to deliver the intended results of a project.

EXAMPLE: In a Safer Water project, inputs might include filters, project members, time, etc.

ACTIVITY

Actions associated with delivering project goals. In other words, they are what the personnel/employees do in order to achieve the aims of the project.

EXAMPLE: In a Safer Water project, activities might be workshops to educate families on the importance of using boiled or filtered water.

OUTPUT

The direct results of a project in the short term. An easy way to think about outputs is to quantify the project activities that have a direct link on the project goal.

EXAMPLE: For example, project outputs in a Safer Water project would be that families in a village are educated on water safety and supplied with filters.

OUTCOME

The intended medium term consequences of a program. Outcomes are the second level of results associated with a project and refers to usually relate to the project goal or aim.

EXAMPLE: For example, in a safe water project, an outcome would be "the percentage of children suffering from diarrhea."

THANK YOU

This concludes Actionable Impact Management (AIM)
'Volume One: Groundwork'

We look forward to the release of 'Volume Two: Metrics' and hope you do as well. Do you have feedback on Volume One? We'd love to hear it. Go ahead and [connect with us](#) to let us know any feedbacks. Alternately visit us online.

