

## Mapping Change

### Using a Theory of Change to Guide Planning and Evaluation

"What are we doing, and why do we think it's going to make a difference? Are we being effective?" Grantmakers ask evaluation questions like these of their grantees and themselves. This brief guide explains why grantmakers use theories of change to guide their questioning, unearth assumptions that underlie their work, establish common language, and develop strong action plans. Contributors to the guide also describe how a theory of change sets the stage for evaluation by clarifying goals, strategies, and milestones.



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#### HIGHLIGHTS

- What a theory of change looks like
- Theory of change vs. logic model
- Mini-case study: theory of change and strategic planning

#### THE SERIES

As grantmakers, we want evaluation and assessment techniques that help document and analyze the work we support in ways that are meaningful to our foundations, grantees, and wider field or community. To help grantmakers weigh the advantages of different approaches, GrantCraft offers [Evaluation Techniques: A Series of Brief Guides](#). Each guide explains the basics of one technique, answers common questions about its use, describes how some grantmakers are applying it and includes a list of resources for readers who want to learn more.

#### SAMPLE QUOTES

"When you're clear about your theory, it's easier to see ... what other inputs might be needed and whether your input might fit in a catalytic place."

— *A former grantmaker, on using a theory of change to gauge the impact of interventions*

"I think the value added of theory of change is that it really forces people to question their own assumptions about whether what they're trying to do will work."

— *An evaluator who works with grantees, describing how a theory of change can inspire deeper questions*

"A theory of change is not a program plan, but it establishes habits of mind that let you create a good program plan."

— *A grantmaker, on a lasting benefit of developing a theory of change*

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