Theory of Change

"Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it."

Henry Ford

"In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is.

Experience without theory is blind, but theory without experience is mere intellectual play."

What is The Theory of Change?

The Theory of Change is an approach used by organisations or in projects to map out the pathway **from activities to the desired long-term goals or outcomes.**

It provides individuals with a road map on how change is expected to happen and what steps are needed to achieve this change.

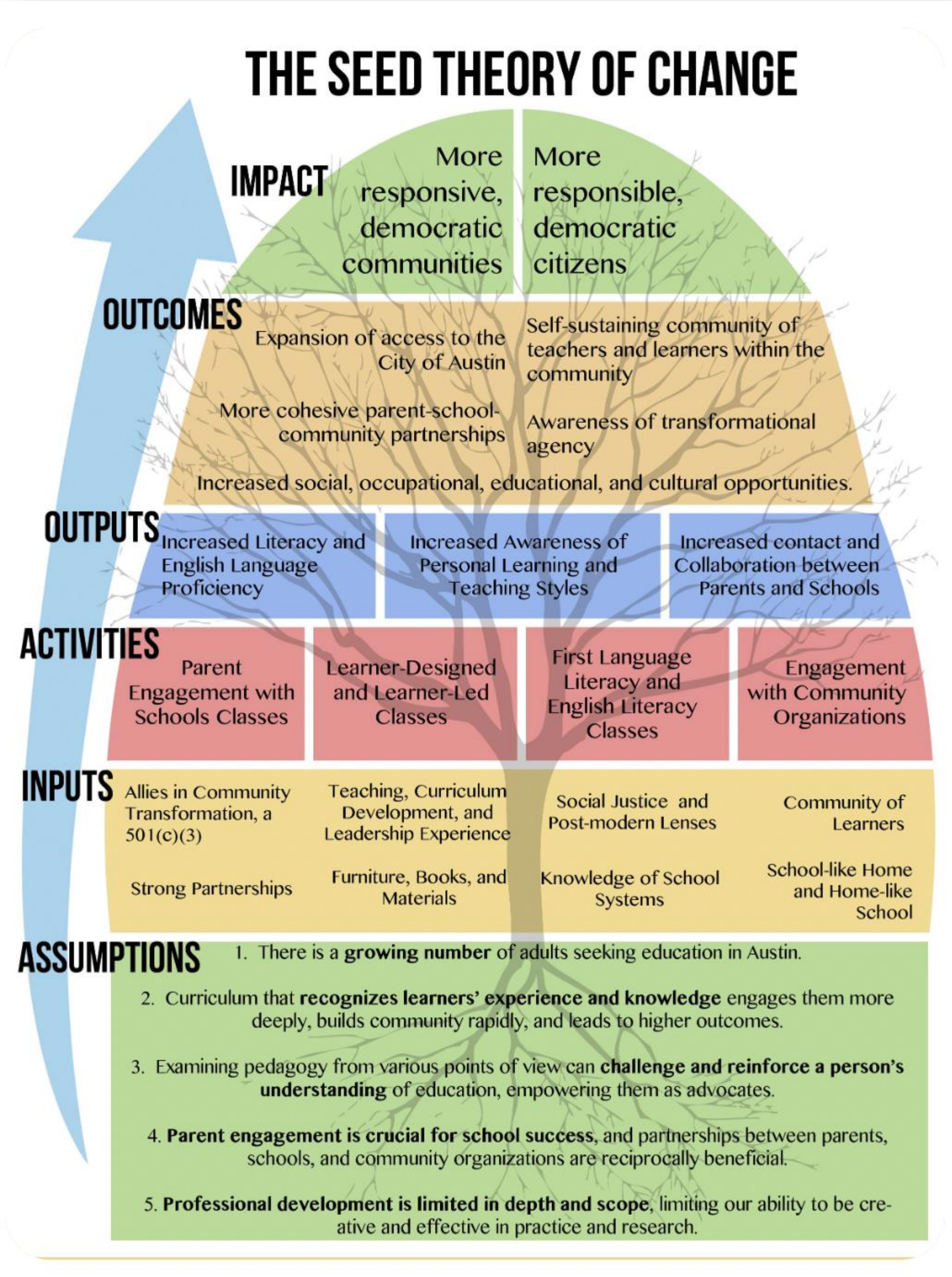
What Elements Make up The Theory of Change?

- **Vision and Goals**: State the desired long-term outcomes and goals, use SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound).
- **Assumptions and Context**: Identify the assumptions around the context in which the intervention operates.
- **Inputs/Resources**: What is required to implement the activities outlined.
- **Activities/Interventions:** Actions that the organisation plans to undertake to bring about the desired change, aligned with the overall goals and objectives.
- **Outputs**: The immediate results of the activities undertaken, typically tangible and measurable in the short term.
- **Outcomes**: The changes or benefits that result from the outputs. Can be short, medium and long-term.
- **Impact**: The broader long-term effects of the intervention on the target population. The ultimate goal of the initiative.

Notes

Developing a Theory of Change is an **iterative** process that often involves input from various stakeholders and may evolve over time as new evidence emerges or circumstances change.

An example of a Theory of Change



THEORY OF CHANGE ELEMENTS	TIPS
WHAT IS THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE ?	• MAP BACKWARDS: EVERYGTHING STEMS FROM HERE • IT HAS TO BE WHOLLY OWNED BY ALL • KEEP IT SHORT – 2 sentences max
WHAT ARE THE <u>INITAL OUTCOMES</u> YOU WILL SEE TOWARDS THE CHANGE?	• IDENTIFY 3 or 4 SMALLER IDENTIABLE CHANGES WHICH TOGETHER HELP YOU MEET THE CHANGE. • KEEP THEM S.M.A.R.T Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic Trackable (or Time-based)
DO YOU NEED TO PHASE THE WORK TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE	• IMPORTANT TO SET OUT PHASES – INCLUDING A POSSIBLE PILOT PHASE. • BREAK DOWN THE PHASES IN TIME – FOR THE FIRST YEAR WE WILL FOCUS ON…
IDENTIFY THE ACTIVITIES OR (INTERVENTIONS) WHICH WILL HELP YOU BRING ABOUT THE CHANGE	• AT THE BOTTOM YOU NEED TO IDENTIFY THE STRANDS OR AREAS IN WHICH YOU OPERATE ? THERE MAY BE JUST ONE OR SEVERAL • THE ACTIVITIES, THE PARTNERS THE PROCESSES WHICH YOU PROVIDE FOR THOSE YOU ARE HELPING *"ORGANISE THE LOGIC"*
LIST AND TEST YOUR ASSUMPTIONS	• REALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU ARE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR ASSUMPTIONS • MAKE SURE YOU CHECK YOUR BIAS AND CONSULT CLOSELY WITH END USERS. • BE OPEN TO BE CHALLENGED (BEST TO GET IT RIGHT)

HAVE A GO

THEORY OF CHANGE ELEMENTS	FIRST DRAFT
WHAT IS THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE ?	…………………………………………………… …………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………
WHAT ARE THE <u>INITAL OUTCOMES</u> YOU WILL SEE TOWARDS THE CHANGE?	…………………………………………………… …………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………
DO YOU NEED TO PHASE THE WORK TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE Phase 1 we see…	…………………………………………………… …………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………
IDENTIFY THE ACTIVITIES OR (INTERVENTIONS) WHICH WILL HELP YOU BRING ABOUT THE CHANGE	…………………………………………………… …………………………………………………… …………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………
LIST YOUR ASSUMPTIONS **HOW ARE YOU GOING TO TEST THESE ASSUMPTIONS?**	……………………… ……………………… ……………………… ……………………… ……………………… ……………………… ……………………… ……………………… ……………………… ………………………

LET'S START DRAFTING!

Lewisham CHANGE MAKERS

Plotting my Theory of Change

Impact

Outcomes

Outputs

Activities

Inputs

Assumptions

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT TOC

1. **What is the primary purpose of a Theory of Change?**

   a) To outline the historical context of an organisation

   b) To provide a step-by-step guide for achieving goals

   c) To evaluate the financial status of a project

   d) To assess the personality traits of team members

2. **Which of the following components is NOT typically included in a Theory of Change?**

   a) Inputs/Resources

   b) Assumptions and Context

   c) Timeline of Events

   d) Outputs

3. **What does the "Impact" component of a Theory of Change refer to?**

   a) The immediate results of the activities undertaken

   b) The long-term effects of the intervention on the target population

   c) The resources required to implement the activities

   d) The assumptions underlying the initiative

4. **Why is it important for organizations to develop a Theory of Change?**

   a) To increase profit margins

   b) To align activities with goals and objectives

   c) To maintain secrecy about their strategies

   d) To confuse stakeholders

5. **How does a Theory of Change support organizational decision-making?**

   a) By providing a historical account of past decisions

   b) By offering a clear roadmap for achieving goals

   c) By ignoring contextual factors

   d) By excluding stakeholders from the decision-making process