

## 2b.TS2 Why Develop Logic Models or Theories of Change? How Can They Be Useful?

A logic model or theory of change for a particular program, initiative or strategy is often developed in collaboration with the evaluator. That is because the evaluator needs to identify benchmarks of implementation and indicators of short- and long-term outcomes to track progress and measure results. Once theories of change pictures and logic models are developed, those involved in designing and implementing the program or strategy often find that they are now better able to describe to outsiders what they are doing, why and to what end.

The value of having a clear, concise and usually visual way of describing a program or strategy for communication purposes is only one benefit of developing a logic model or theory of change. The process of development itself can strengthen the understanding and commitment of program leadership and staff or of collaborative partners by providing the opportunity for assumptions and expectations to be put on the table for discussion and agreement.

Other benefits -- ones that should encourage development of a logic model or theory of change, regardless of plans for evaluation -- include:

- anticipating weaknesses, limitations or gaps in program or strategy activities that need to be addressed to achieve the desired impact on outcomes
- identifying components of a program or strategy that need to be coordinated, or the sequence in which these components should be implemented, to be most effective and efficient
- highlighting factors outside of the program or strategy that either affect its implementation or its impact -- so that potential partnerships or collaboration with other groups or organizations who might address those factors can be pursued
- setting priorities among possible benefits that could be tracked