Theory of Change Workshop Session I

# Homework Assignment 1 – September 16, 2020

### Overview

There are three options for this assignment.

## OPtion 1

Investigate a grand theory that is the blueprint for your organization. Recall that I presented two types of grand theories. *Type I* are the big theories that academics and researchers investigate (e.g., Darwinian Natural Selection, Marxism, Critical Theory, Positive Psychology). *Type II* are proven theories of change that are general and apply to lots of different circumstances (e.g., changing beliefs leads to changing behavior). Figure out if there are particular authors or writers that inspire your organization. What are the core ideas or principles of this theory? How do you see it in action in your organization?

Write a paragraph below about what you learned. Include the name of the theory and how you “see” it in your organization’s work.

## Option 2

Revisit your organization’s Theory of Change or Logic Model (for me, they are basically the same thing). Investigate it for the basic components of the logic model: problem statement, activities, outputs, outcomes, and goals. Are they clearly described? When was the last time this theory of change was updated? Is it accurate as of now?

If all you have is a diagram, write a paragraph describing how the ToC works. If all you have is a narrative, construct a diagram version of the theory of change.

## Option 3

Revisit the paired exercise we completed in the middle of the presentation about grocery carts. Complete that assignment more carefully using a theory of change approach. See “option 2” above for the components of the logic model. See if you make your theory of a change in to one that is “worth believing in.” Create your theory of change and evaluate it by the three main criteria:

* Is it believable? – Would someone in your field think this is program theory could work?
* Is it actionable? – Could your organization actually do the theory of change? Is it realistic in terms of your organization’s capacity?
* Is it testable? - Can you identify points along the way that could be used to evaluate the theory’s effectiveness? Can you envision certain points of measurement in the theory? (hint: outputs and outcomes are good places for measurement).

Create a theory of change for the grocery cart problem using PowerPoint or Google Slides or a similar software. Be sure to label the parts of your ToC: problem statement, activities, outputs, outcomes, and goals.

# Workspace

Write your paragraphs. For diagrams, take a screenshot or create an image and paste it here.