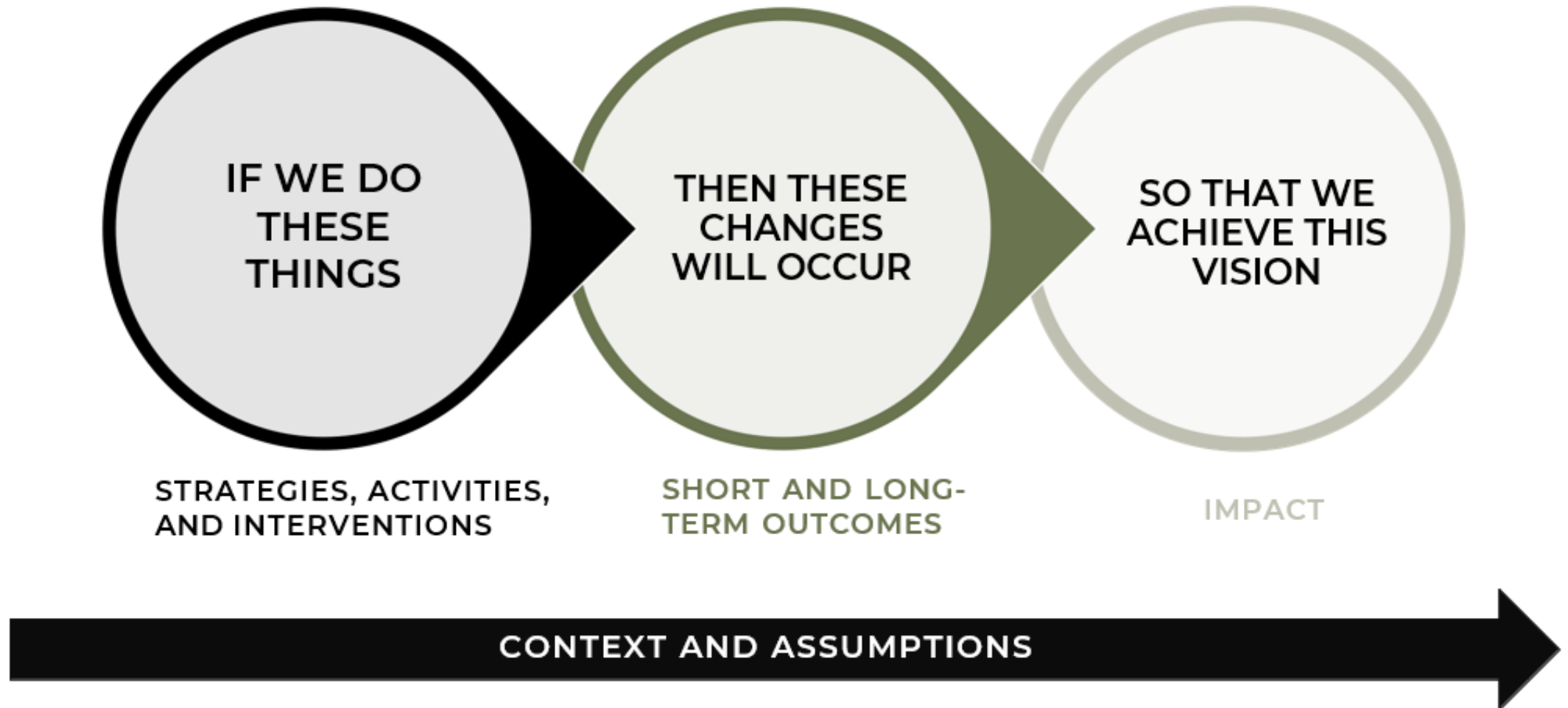


Part 1: Are We There Yet?

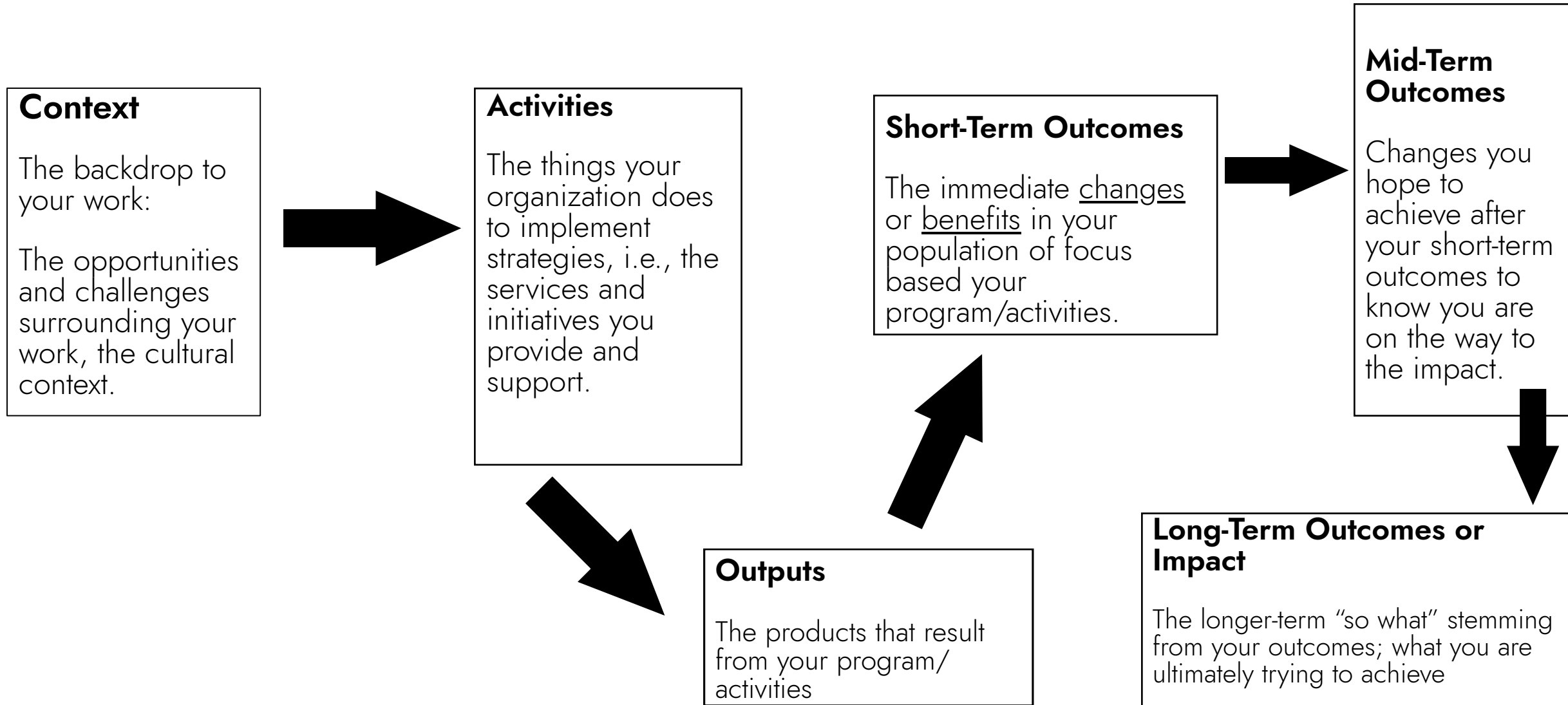
A Guide to Developing a Theory of Change to Help Plan and Evaluate Your Programs

Drive Evaluation Studio, Inc.
October 2025

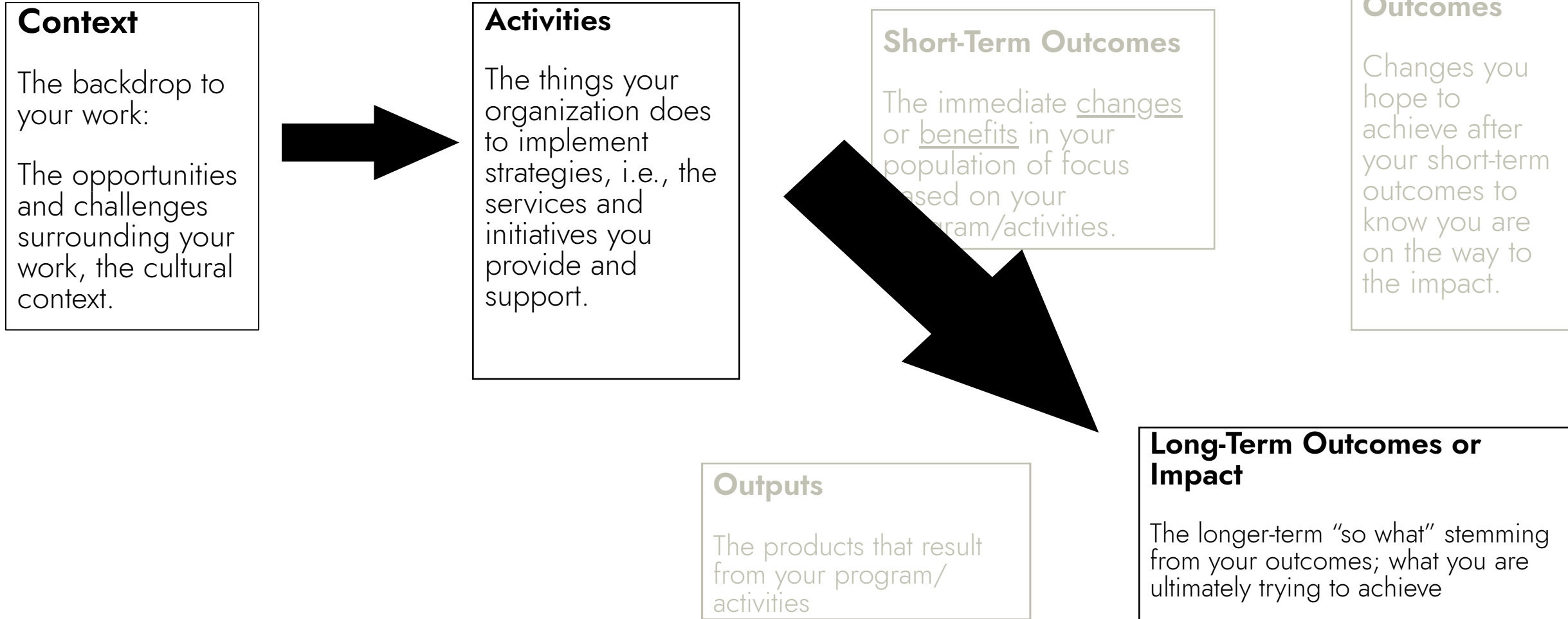
How Program Logic Flows



Program Logic in More Detail



Your Elevator Speech



Logic Model Components

- **Inputs**

The resources required to operate the program, such as funding, staff, and materials.

- **Activities**

The actions or processes that transform inputs into outputs.

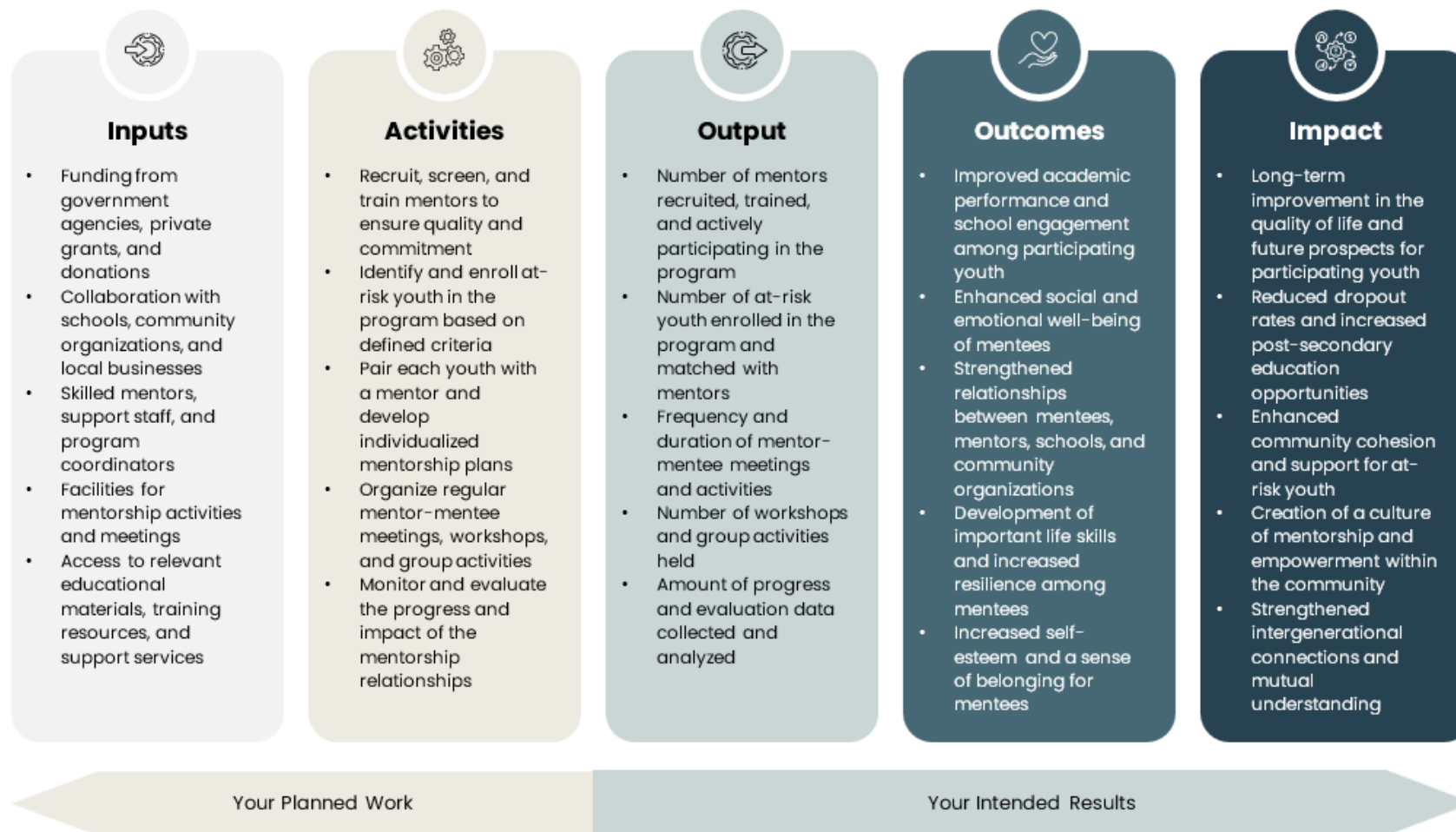
- **Outputs**

The direct products or services resulting from the program's activities, and how to measurably know they have been achieved

- **Outcomes**

The changes or benefits that result from the program's outputs.

Program logic model

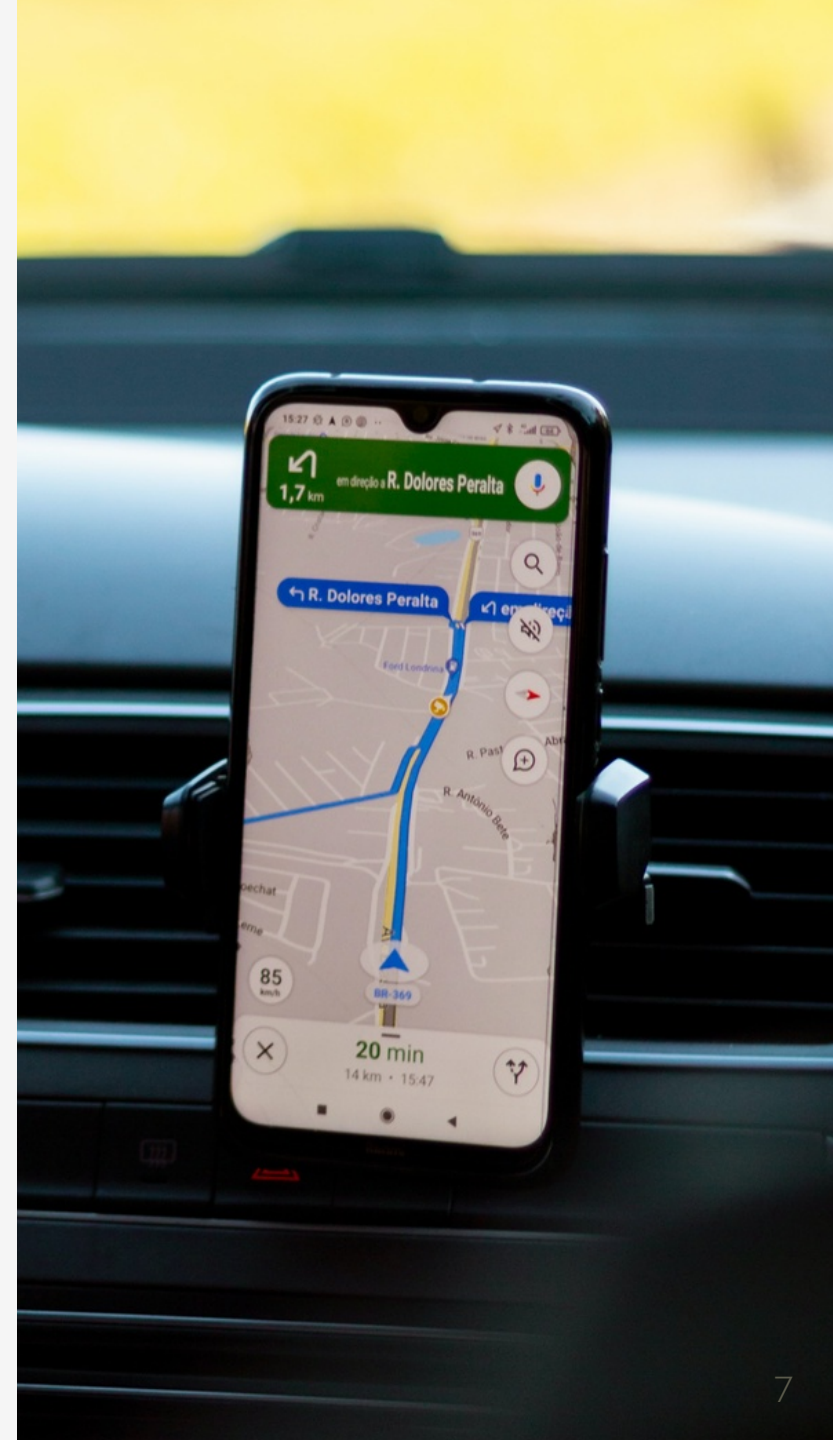


What is a Theory of Change?

A conceptual roadmap for how and why an intervention is expected to achieve its intended impact.

"If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there."

- Lewis Carroll



Theory of Change Components



Key Context

The opportunities, challenges, cultural factors, and other elements of the situation and circumstances that are outside of our control



Assumptions

The things we believe to be true underlying the theory (why we think the change can reasonably occur or the necessary conditions for change to occur)



Strategies/Activities

What we do; typically expressed as an action



Short- and Long-term Outcomes

What we achieve; outcomes are changes as a result of our strategies and interventions



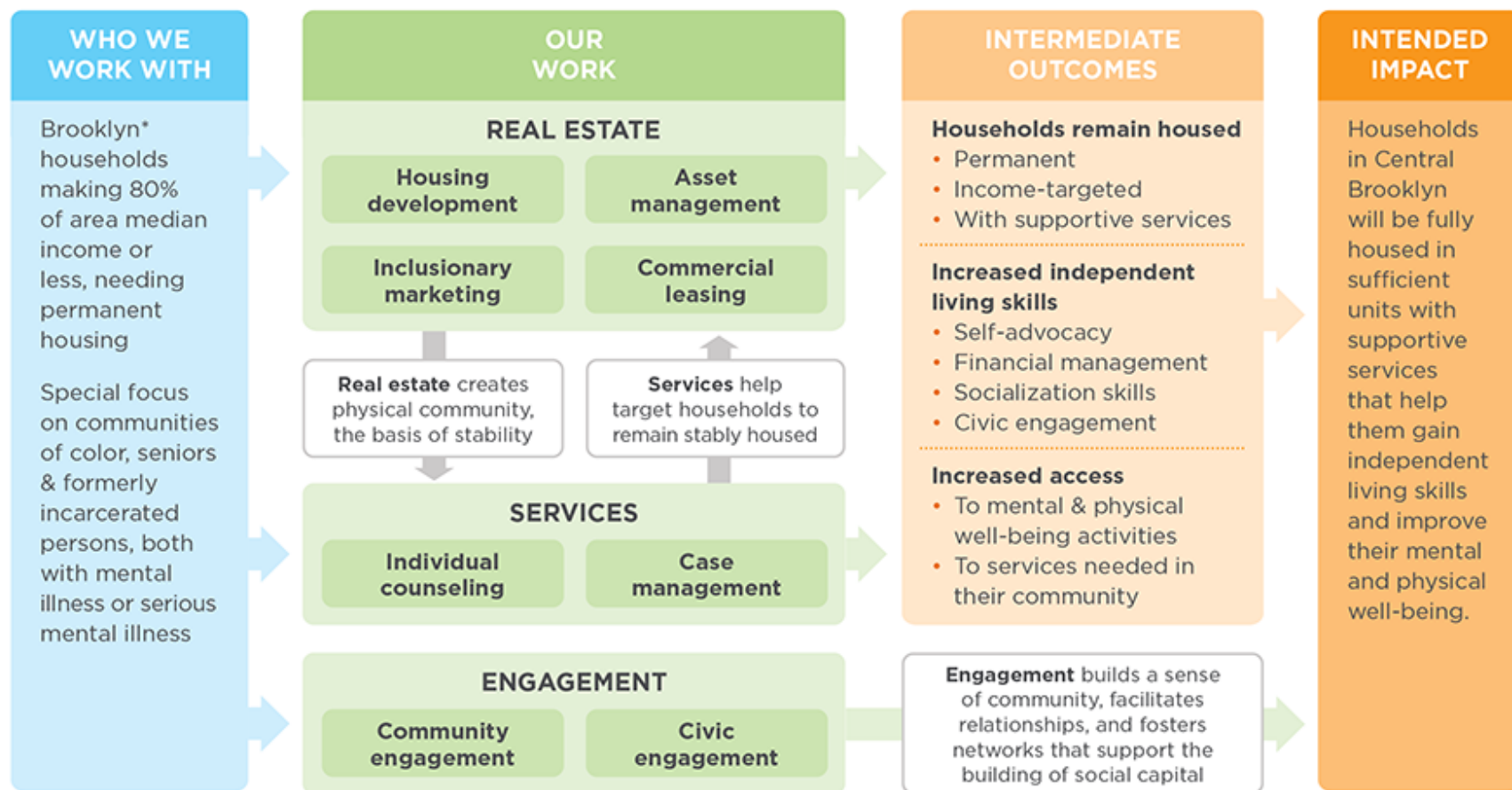
Vision/Impact

The change we are trying to see in the world and toward which we are working (sometimes "the north star")

IMPACCT Brooklyn—Intended Impact and Theory of Change



IMPACCT Brooklyn is focused on quality service and longevity. Our in-house talent, community expertise, organizational reputation, and deep collaborative relationships allow us to create permanently affordable housing. Our model employs a hand-in-hand, people-first approach, hinged on building and sustaining relationships that makes us a trusted provider in our communities.



*Focus neighborhoods are Brownsville, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, Fort Greene/Clinton Hill, Prospect Heights, and PLG/Flatbush; we also focus on IMPACCT-owned buildings in various locations.

Source: IMPACCT Brooklyn and The Bridgespan Group



eli's place
where recovery grows

Overarching Theory of Change

CORE ELEMENTS

- A long-term rural residential program
- Therapeutic community
- Integrated treatment (Individual treatment, mental health & addiction treatment, family support)
- Skill development (resilience, life, and work skills)
- Graduated transition to community
- On-going research and evaluation to inform clinical care

MECHANISMS OF CHANGE

- Engagement and collaboration
- Recovery approach
- Evidence-based practices
- Integrated & individualized assessment and treatment
- Therapeutic milieu in a rural setting
- Skill development
- Family and caregiver engagement

EARLY IMPACTS

- Hope
- New life skills
- New work skills
- Decrease in symptoms of mental illness
- Decrease in substance use
- Increase in adaptive functioning
- Enhanced coping strategies
- Increase in self-confidence
- Improved family and caregiver relationships

MID/LONG TERM OUTCOMES

- Maintained symptom management and resilience
- Engagement in meaningful activities
- Successful community living & working
- Engagement with support provided by community partners
- Improved quality of life
- Improved relationships
- Maintenance of substance use goals
- Decrease in hospital admissions
- Program improvement as a result of analysis of evaluation

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- Reduced healthcare costs
- Reduced use of emergency department & hospital in-patient for mental health & physical care
- Increased employment, education & volunteering
- Reduced homelessness
- Decreased use of social assistance
- Reduced involvement in the justice system
- Reduced substance abuse
- Fewer lost caregiver workdays
- Centre of Excellence, the program can be replicated



OUTDOOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT – THEORY OF CHANGE



- Exposure to a safe, joyful natural environment
- Engaging in physically, mentally and emotionally challenging outdoor activities
- Developing positive relationships with supportive mentors
- Providing strong support networks for participating youth

- Cultivating open mindedness
- Seeing the world from a different view
- Understanding that there are choices
- Recognizing that choices have consequences (for self and others)
- Developing hope, respect, a sense of responsibility, and confidence
- Improving self-image
- Developing respect and appreciation for nature

- Open up to help/outside assistance
- Asking for or offering help when needed
- Trusting others
- Setting goals
- Thinking of consequences before acting
- Decreases in substance abuse, delinquent behaviors
- Actively involved in positive activities
- Active role in helping the environment
- Increased resilience

- Becoming a responsible citizen
- Living a healthy lifestyle
- Improving academic achievement
- Engagement in post secondary education
- Obtaining a job
- Practicing environmental stewardship

Uses for a Theory of Change

As a planning or recalibration tool

- Maps out a strategy
- Provides opportunity to consider how and why
- Provides opportunity to modify strategies and interventions
- Informs decisions as the work evolves

As a communication tool

- Builds consensus among stakeholders around activities and outcomes
- Provides common language for explanation of efforts ("We do X to achieve Y")

As an evaluation tool

- Identifies outcomes to be measured and a timeframe for measuring them
- Maps how programs will lead to outcomes by linking activities to outcomes and outcomes to assumptions

When to Use Theories of Change and Logic Models

Use theories of change to:	Use logic models to:
Design or summarize a complex initiative	Present a quick and simple representation of something
Evaluate appropriate outcomes at right time in right sequence	Show basic inputs, activities and outcomes and guide basic evaluation
Explain more precisely why an initiative did or did not work	Summarize a more complex undertaking into basic categories
This is your GPS overview map	These are your turn by turn directions

(Adapted from Clarke and Anderson, 2004)

Theory of Change Components

Vision/Impact

- The change we hope to see in the world (aka the "north star")
- Often something we are contributing to and not achieving alone
- Found in your vision or mission statements

The Importance of Context

- **Opportunities, challenges, and elements outside of our control.**
 - Can be community-based, social, cultural, and political.
- **As context shifts, activities could shift. Short-term outcomes may also shift.**

1 in 5 Black and Latinx children in the Hartford region live in poverty, compared to 1 in 100 white children, according to 2019 data.

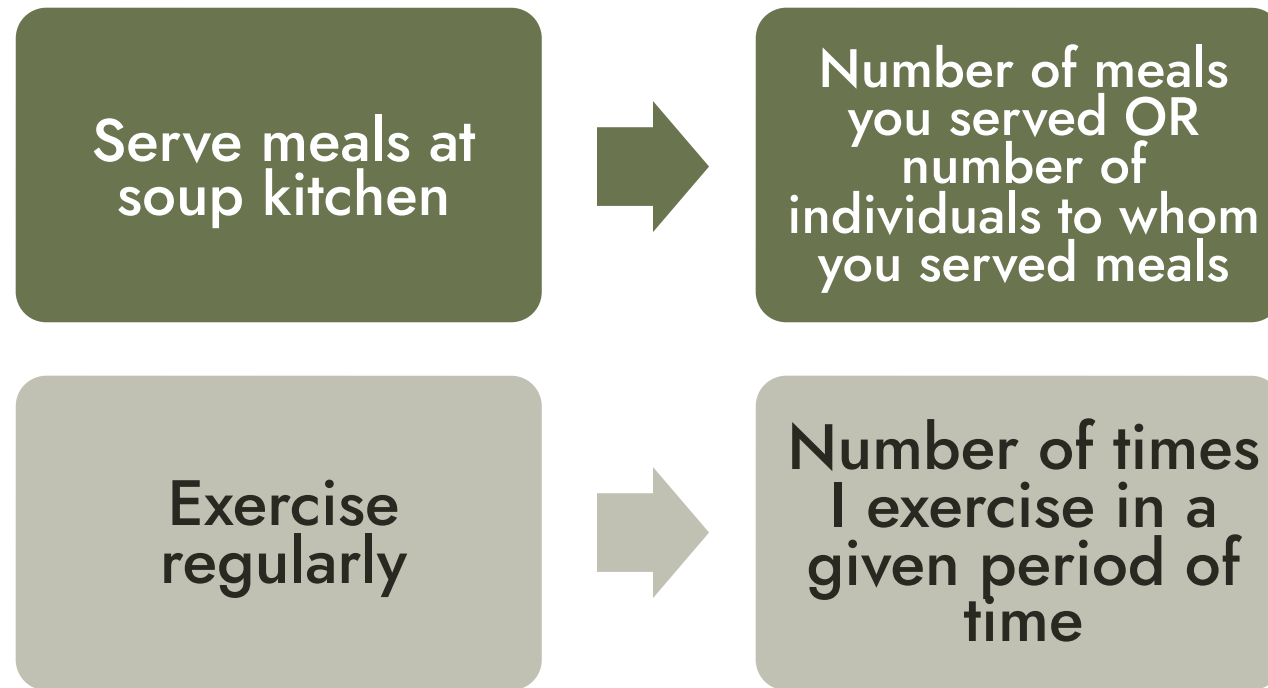
Only 46% of Hartford residents say they feel safe walking around their neighborhood at night. In the inner ring suburbs, that number is 69%, and in the outer ring suburbs, it's 81%.

Strategies/Activities

- The things you do
- Typically expressed as an action

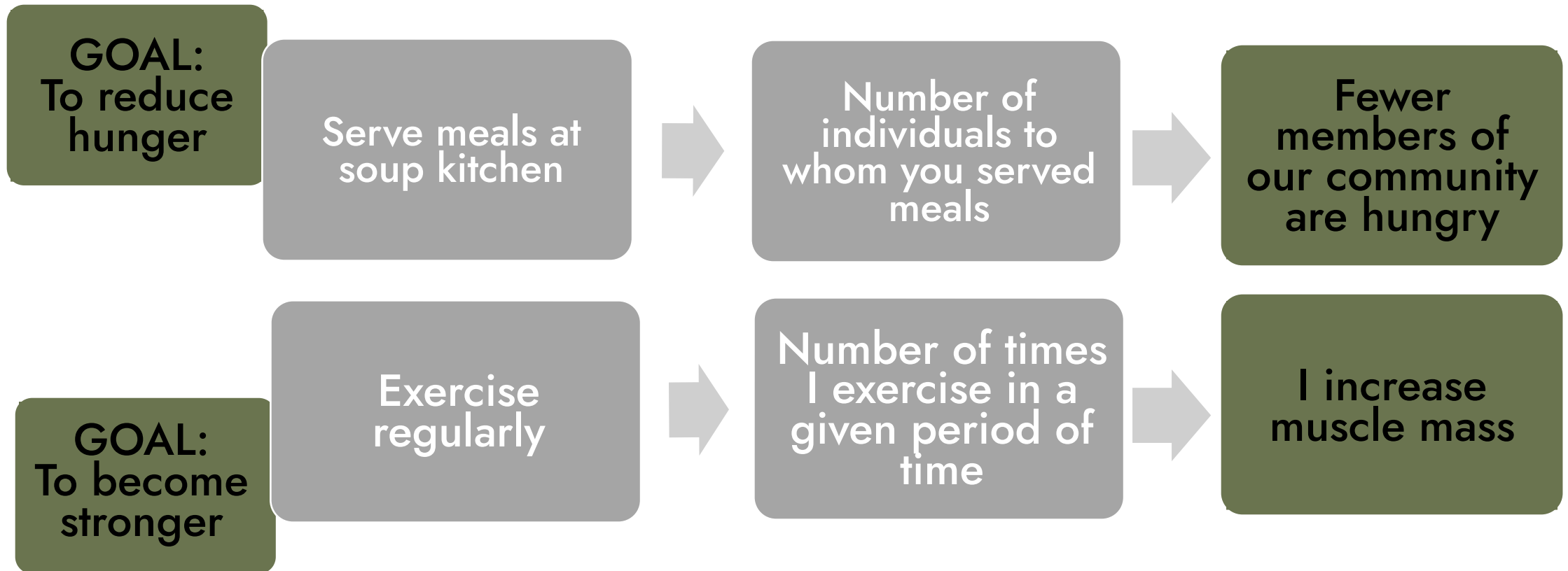
What are Outputs?

Quantifiable measures of your activities. Outputs tell the story of what you did or produced. They do NOT address the value or impact of your work but can help determine if the work is progressing as expected.



What are Outcomes?

Outcomes are changes in the world that result from your services, activities, or products. Outcomes are the benefits to your target population.

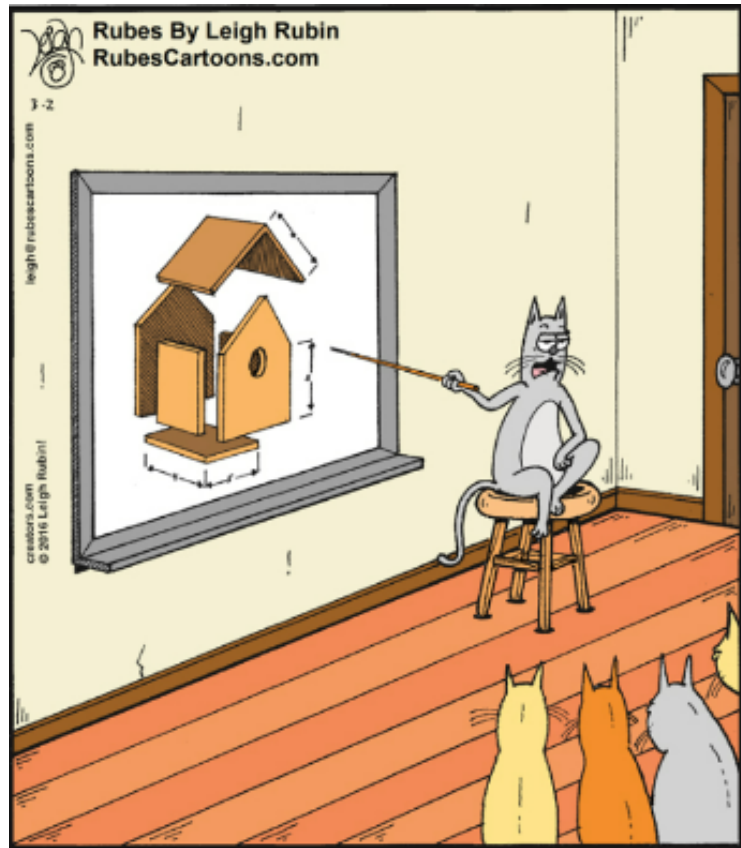


Activities and **Outcomes**: Identifying the Link



- **Providing high-quality arts instruction** will lead to:
- **Increased knowledge of critical arts concepts among students**, in the short term.
- **An increased number of students in advanced-level arts programming** in the long term.

Examining Our Assumptions



"If you build it, they will come."

Why we assume a particular intervention might work

Assumptions are based on:

- Theory
- Applied research
- Previous experience
- Professional hunches

For example, we believe providing job training will lead to employment. Underlying assumptions:

- Jobs are available
- Employers will hire our participants
- Training matches market needs

Steps to Create A TOC For Existing Programs

- 1 | Convene your group
- 2 | Provide TOC 101
- 3 | Frame your context
- 4 | Define your long-term outcome or impact statement
- 5 | List existing activity anchors
- 6 | Identify short-term and intermediate outcomes
- 7 | Articulate assumptions
- 8 | Check, pressure test, and wordsmith
- 9 | Sit with it. Revisit it. Edit it. Update it.

For a new program, flip steps five and six, working backwards from outcomes to activities.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Confusing outputs with outcomes
- Making assumptions too vague
- Listing activities without connecting them to outcomes
- Not considering sequencing of outcomes
- Skipping context analysis

Wrap Up & Next Steps

HOMEWORK: Use the resources provided to walk through this exercise with your team. Fill in the TOC template, and bring it to our next session.

QUESTIONS? elena@driveevaluation.com

Step 1:
**Complete
homework**

Step 2: **Come to
our next session
on Nov 18th**