**Hello, HFPG Mini Series Participants!**

This packet is intended to help you clearly communicate why you do what you do and how it will contribute to a better world through developing your very own Theory of Change (TOC).

Work as an organizational team to complete one homework assignment, and bring this to our next session in November.

| **Name of organization** |  |
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*Now, let’s jump in!*

As a reminder, **a Theory of Change is a conceptual roadmap** that depicts how and why an intervention is anticipated to contribute to a big, audacious goal (vision). It typically includes a graphical and/or narrative depiction of how specific strategies (where you focus your energy) will lead to changes (outcomes) that contribute to the kind of world you want to live in (vision).

A TOC typically includes:

* **VISION/IMPACT:** The change you hope to see in the world; your "north star"
  + *E.g.: "A community where all residents have stable housing"*
* **CONTEXT:** The backdrop: opportunities, challenges, conditions that shape your work
  + *E.g.: "Housing costs increased 40% while median income is flat"*
* **ACTIVITIES:** The things you DO; your programs, services, interventions
  + *E.g.: "Provide financial literacy workshops"*
* **SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES:** Immediate changes (0-1 year)
  + *E.g.: "Participants increase savings by 10%"*
* **MID-TERM OUTCOMES:** Next-level changes (1-3 years)
  + *E.g.: "Participants improve credit scores"*
* **LONG-TERM OUTCOMES:** Changes that contribute to impact (3-5+ years)
  + *E.g.: "Participants secure stable housing"*
* **ASSUMPTIONS:** What you believe must be true for your theory to work
  + *E.g.: "Participants have access to banking services"*
* ***(Optional)* OUTPUTS:** Quantifiable measures of your activities (what you produced)
  + *E.g.: "120 residents completed 8-week workshop series*

**Making your own TOC**

Use the following worksheets to clarify each element of your TOC and the assumptions that underlie your thinking.

First, focus on the left side of each table. Once completed, circle back to the assumptions column on the right side of the table.

**Understanding your CONTEXT**

*→ The opportunities, challenges, cultural factors, and other elements of the situation and circumstances that we cannot control.*

Use the space below to capture the context in which you will do your work. Consider the following questions as you think about your context:

* What is the context in which your work exists?
* What of that is within or outside your sphere of influence, and how does that inform the work you do?
* Which communities are you trying to impact through your work and how are you including their thinking and voices so they are driving their own solutions?

| **Context:** | **Assumptions:**  What assumptions are you making about the world and the individuals/communities/ systems you want to change? |
| --- | --- |

**What is your VISION?**

*→ The specific and achievable, but ambitious, change in the world that is critical for solving a long-term challenge in the world. It is the ultimate purpose or goal of your work.*

Use the space below to capture your vision and assumptions. Consider the following questions as you think about your vision:

* What changes do you want to see in the world?
* Who or what are you hoping those changes would impact through your work?

| **Vision:** | **Assumptions:**  What assumptions are you making about the world and the individuals/communities/ systems you want to change? |
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Working backward from longer-term to shorter-term, what **OUTCOMES would be possible** through your work to contribute to making your vision a reality?

*→ The results that your work intends to achieve. They are the changes that occur or the difference that is made for individuals, groups, communities, and/or systems during or after an intervention (e.g., initiative, policy, program, or project). They reflect the core achievements we hope for through our work.*

Use the space below to capture your outcomes and assumptions. Consider the following questions as you think about your outcomes:

* **What or who** are you hoping to change through your work? Is it individuals, families, communities, organizations, and or systems?
* **How** will they change? Will something increase/decrease, become stronger/weaker, be maintained/improved, etc.? What is the “something”-- a behavior, mindset, policy, network, skill, access, health, etc.?
* **How long** might it take to achieve or see those changes?

| **Long-term Outcomes:** | **Assumptions:**  What assumptions are you making about the world and the individuals/communities/ systems you want to change? |
| --- | --- |
| **Mid-term Outcomes** | **Assumptions:**  What assumptions are you making about the world and the individuals/communities/ systems you want to change? |
| **Short-term Outcomes** | **Assumptions:**  What assumptions are you making about the world and the individuals/communities/ systems you want to change? |

**What STRATEGIES will you use** to catalyze or create the conditions for change you hope to achieve (your outcomes)?

*→ The actions we take or what we do with the resources we have to achieve our desired outcomes and, ultimately, our vision.*

Use the space below to capture your outcomes and assumptions. Consider the following questions as you think about your strategies:

* What is at the heart of the need you are trying to address–the root cause(s)?
* Considering the root cause(s) and your resources, how can you best focus your energy to help address the root cause(s)?
* What gaps are you most uniquely positioned to fill?
* What are the resources/skill sets you can leverage to achieve the changes you want to see?

| **Strategies:** | **Assumptions**:  What assumptions are you making about the world and the individuals/communities/ systems you want to change? |
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***Congratulations!*** *You have identified the key elements of your TOC. If you haven’t yet, go back through each element and identify the underlying* ***ASSUMPTIONS****.*

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| **FINALLY, TESTING YOUR LOGIC** Now, use this formula to check if your TOC makes sense:  *"If we [ACTIVITY], then [SHORT-TERM OUTCOME] will happen, which will lead to [MID-TERM OUTCOME], ultimately contributing to [LONG-TERM OUTCOME/IMPACT], assuming that [ASSUMPTION]."*  **Example:**  *"If we provide financial literacy training, then participants will increase their financial knowledge, which will lead to improved savings behaviors, ultimately contributing to housing stability, assuming that participants have access to banking services and jobs that pay a living wage."* |
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*You did it! Now for the fun part…***Making your TOC come alive!**

Draw or list it our in a linear way – top to bottom, left to right, or however makes sense for your work. If it’s helpful, use the template on the next page.

| Org/Program Name & Vision: |
| --- |

| Context: | Assumptions: |
| --- | --- |

| Strategies/Activities | Short-term outcomes | Mid-term outcomes | Long-term outcomes |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
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| (Optional) Outputs: |
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