

Theory of Change

Are you enthusiastic about making a difference in your community and beyond, but unsure about the best way to approach it? A Theory of Change is a great tool that organisations and campaigners use to design impactful strategies for social and environmental change. Here, we'll share with you a simple theory of change that can be used for any campaign.

What is the Theory of Change?

The Theory of Change is a comprehensive model that helps to chart the path toward a desired social or environmental outcome. It pinpoints the critical steps, resources, and intermediate results necessary for achieving the desired impact. By providing a transparent roadmap, the Theory of Change helps you to be focused and systematic in your approach to addressing complex issues.

Campaigning with the Theory of Change

Incorporating the Theory of Change into your campaigns enables you to:

- **Clarify your objectives:** Define the ultimate goal you aim to achieve and the problem you seek to address.
- **Identify intermediate outcomes:** Recognise the smaller outcomes that pave the way to your ultimate goal.
- **Determine critical steps:** Outline the essential steps needed to get to your intermediate outcomes and, ultimately, your primary objective.
- **Develop a strategic focus:** Prioritise specific areas of work and allocate resources more effectively.
- **Enhance collaboration:** Encourage communication with key players, enabling better cooperation and support.
- **Monitor progress:** Establish clear indicators to track your campaign's progress and evaluate the success of your strategies.

Crafting a Theory of Change for Campaigns

To create your own Theory of Change, follow these steps:

1. **Identify your ultimate goal:** Clearly state the long-term objectives that your campaign aims to achieve e.g. reduce plastic waste across Durham campus.
2. **Map backward:** Map backwards from your end goal, identifying short-term goals that must be achieved first to get to the end goal e.g. increase number of recycling bins in university spaces, set up a student-led rubbish-collection initiative.
3. **Complete the outcomes framework:** Map out the stages of the campaign, including short-term, medium-term and long-term outcomes.

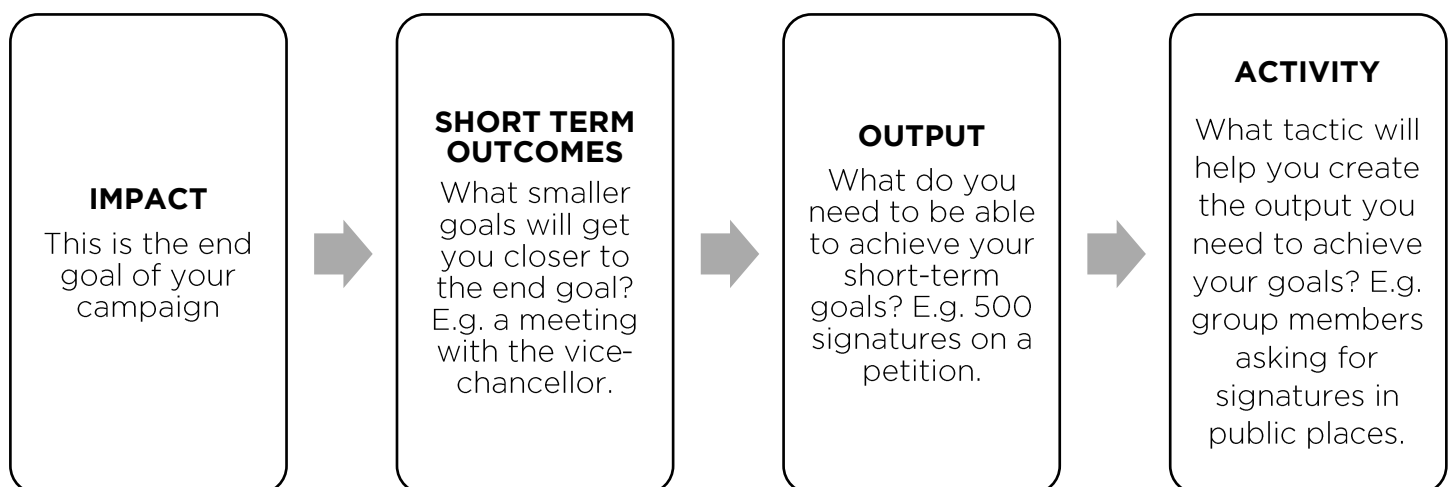
- 4. Identify assumptions:** Identify what assumption must be met for goals to be achieved e.g. a rubbish collection initiative relies on the assumption that people and resources are available.
- 5. Recognize external influences:** Acknowledge external factors that could influence your campaign and identify ways to address them e.g. finances may be limited but fundraisers could be a solution.
- 6. Review and adapt:** Continuously evaluate and adapt your Theory of Change – assess the success of the outcomes so far and to respond to new insights, challenges, and opportunities.

For more detailed information on the Theory of Change, visit this website:

- [Center for Theory of Change - Theory of Change Community](#).

Theory of Change Outline

Here is an example of what a theory of change might look like. Depending on the problem being tackled, each framework will be different. Campaigns will usually have several short-term goals that, if they are achieved will result in you winning your campaign.



Have questions or need further support?

- Contact Sophie, the activism programme coordinator at sophie.l.birch@durham.ac.uk.
- Book a planning session or check-in session here to receive advice and support with your campaign: [Book time with BIRCH. SOPHIE L.D.](#)
- For more information visit [Campaigns @ Durham SU](#)