Department for International Development

UKaid from the British people

CDA COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECTS

Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security & Justice Programmes

Part I: What they are, different types, how to develop and use them

Principal Author
Peter Woodrow
with Nick Oatley

Date:
March 2013

Practice Products for the CCVRI

Improving Measurement in DFID Crime, Conflict & Violence Programming

This document is one of a series of Practice Products developed under the ***Conflict, Crime, and Violence Results Initiative (CCVRI)***. The full set of products is intended to support DFID country offices and their partners to develop better measures of programme results in difficult conflict and fragile environments.

DFID recognises the need to focus on the ***results*** of its work in developing countries. To this end, DFID strives to account better for our efforts on behalf of UK taxpayers, offering clarity regarding the value and impact of our work. The Results Initiative operates under the assumption that we will achieve our development objectives with our national partners more effectively if we generate—collectively—a clear picture of the progress being made.

Within DFID, the Conflict Humanitarian and Security Department has established a partnership with a consortium of leading organisations in the fields of conflict, security and justice to develop more effective approaches to the use of data in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes that contribute to reducing conflict, crime and violence.

In addition to producing these Practice Products, the consortium has established a Help Desk function to provide direct and customized support to country offices as they endeavour to improve measurement of results in local contexts.

The Help Desk can be accessed by contacting helpdesk@smallarmssurvey.org.

The views expressed in this Practice Product are the sole opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all consortia partners. This Practice Product does not reflect an official DFID position.

Members of the consortium

care® Defending Dignity. Fighting Poverty.	HARVARD Kennedy School Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management
Search for Common Ground	VERA INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE
CDA COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECTS ACLED Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset	small arms survey INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRIME

Document Summary

Title: Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security & Justice Programmes: Part I: What are they, different types, how to develop and use them

Purpose and intended use of this document:

The goal of this document is to improve the effectiveness of DFID programmes and the measurement of their impacts by providing DFID Advisers with the practical skills to develop high quality theories of change, to understand the role they play in programme design and assessment. It is intended for DFID advisors to more clearly and explicitly articulate their theories of change as a means of improving the effectiveness of interventions.

Part I first explores the fundamentals of theories of change: what they are, why they are important, and how to create a theory of change. It explores theories of change at different levels, and concludes with advice on how theories of change can enhance the effectiveness and relevance of programming.

Part II continues to build upon Part I by focusing on how theories of change can be used in the monitoring and evaluation stages of the project cycle. It provides practical guidance on how and why to use theories of change-focused monitoring and evaluation strategies, particularly exploring the ways in which theories of change can be included in any evaluation approach.

Key questions this document addresses:

What are theories of change & why do we care?
What are the different types & levels of theories of change?
How should I develop theories of change?
How should I use theories of change?

Key messages/essential "take aways":

- A basic definition applicable to all initiatives that seek to induce change is as follows: *A theory of change explains why and how we think certain actions will produce desired change in a given context.*
- In their simplest form, Theories of change are expressed in the following form:
    - *"**If** we do X (action), **then** we will produce Y (change/shift towards peace, justice, security)"*
      or
    - *"We believe that by doing X (action) successfully, we will produce Y (movement towards a desired goal)"*
- It is often helpful and clarifying to extend the statement a bit further by adding at least some of the rationale or logic in a "because" phrase. This then produces the formula: "***If*** we do X…, ***then*** Y..., ***because*** Z…."
- Making a theory of change explicit allows us to reveal our **assumptions** about how change will happen, how and why our chosen strategy or programme will achieve its outcomes and desired impacts, and why it will function better than others in this context. Revealing these assumptions also helps identify gaps and unmet needs, including additional necessary activities or actors that should be engaged. We may also detect activities that are extraneous, weak or that fail to contribute to achieving the overall goal.

- Theories of changed are embedded in a particular **context** and should be considered in **context**. How change can or will occur in one context cannot be automatically transferred to another setting. Theories of change must therefore be linked to a robust **conflict analysis**, in order to ensure that programming addresses the key drivers of conflict and fragility in the context.
- Theories of change can be developed or identified at several **different levels**. These range from the strategic or policy level, through broad sectoral or program levels, to project-level theories, and finally micro-level theories about specific limited activities.
    - **Strategic Level:** What is the change logic that informs the choice of priority areas within a country strategy (formal or informal)—and why were other options not chosen?
    - **Portfolio/Sector/Programme Level:** What are the two or three dominant theories of change embedded in the programming within the sector/portfolio? How will the combined efforts of the range of funded projects achieve desired changes (results) within a priority area?
    - **Project Level:** What is the core theory of change informing the project approach? How will reaching the project goal/objective contribute to the larger goals/objectives at the sector/programme level?
    - **Activity Level:** How will the activity (training, dialogue…) produce the intended micro-level change(s) and, ultimately, lead to the project objectives/goals?
- It is **never too late to develop a theory of change*;*** it can be useful during all stages of the programming cycle.

Intended audience of this document (including assumed skill level):

The intended audience of this series of documents are DFID advisors for conflict, crime and violence programming. The secondary audiences are staffs working in or on issues relating to conflict, crime and violence programming including program designers, managers, M&E specialists and evaluators.

Part I assumes little to no knowledge of theories of change, and therefore is the introductory piece to this guidance series. Part II, as the secondary piece in this series, assumes an introductory knowledge of theories of change, as well as of monitoring and evaluation approaches, tools and processes.

Key topics/tags:

Theories of change
Levels of theories of change
Programme logic
Programme design
Logic models

Authors and their organizations:

Peter Woodrow, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects with Nick Oatley, Search for Common Ground

Cross-references to other documents in the series:

Corlazzoli, V., and White, J. (2013) *Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security and Justice Programmes: Part II: Using Theories of Change in Monitoring and Evaluation* (Search for Common Ground)

Goldwyn, R., and Chigas, D. (2013) *Monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity – methodological challenges and practical solutions* (CARE and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects)

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Introduction

Why theories of change?

This paper is part of a series of guidance products focused on *measuring results* in conflict, justice and security programmes. All of these programme efforts seek to promote positive change in situations of on-going tension and state fragility. If we are to measure results, we need to be clear about the changes we expect to see and the pathway for getting there. Articulating the theory of change helps us do that. The OECD DAC Guidance "offers theories of change as one way to help evaluators assess and programme managers and decision makers think through the hypotheses of change and assumptions that underpin their work"[1].

At its best, working with theories of change is a process in which we can think through proposed or existing programming in order to examine whether activities will add up to intended project or programme results—and whether a range of programmes will add up to higher level sectoral or even country level outcomes.

Structure of the paper

This paper is intended as a practical guide for DFID staff and their implementing partners regarding theories of change.

Section I presents basic definitions of theories of change and how they can be used to ensure programme effectiveness.

While most guides to theories of change concentrate only on project level applications, Section 2 explains how theories of change work at different levels, from the strategic or country level, to entire sectors or portfolios of programmes, to the level of projects or programmes and finally micro level activities.

Section 3 provides a set of steps to developing a theory of change, again addressing different levels and focusing on the expected changes from programmatic efforts.

Section 4 examines several uses of theories of change, including ensuring robust programmatic logic (again at different levels). The section also addresses how theories of change fit with logic models or log-frames and discusses how theories of change can help in performing a series of reality checks.

This paper is Part I of a two-part product. Part II will discuss application of theories of change in monitoring and evaluation processes.

[1] OECD DAC (2012) *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results* (Paris: OECD Publishing) p. 80.

1 Definition & Rationale for Using Theories of Change

Theory of change is a set of beliefs about how change happens and, as such, it explains why and how certain actions will produce the desired changes in a given context, at a given time. Developing a sound, clear, evidence-based theory of change is one potentially useful way to improve design. Theory of change thinking is an approach that encourages critical thinking throughout the programme cycle[2].

1.1 Theories of change defined

A basic definition applicable to all initiatives that seek to induce change is as follows:

> ***A theory of change explains why we think certain actions will produce desired change in a given context.***

Interventions, particularly those that address issues of conflict, peace, justice and security, are often based on approaches and tactics that are rooted in implicit theories of change. In many cases such theories are subconscious and unstated. They are embedded in the skills and approaches of individual practitioners and organisations, their capacities and 'technologies,' attachments to favourite methodologies, and the perspectives they bring to the change process. When designing interventions, it is important to make these theories explicit. Thus, a theory of change is an articulation of our assumptions and why or how we believe certain strategies/objectives will result in a declared goal or vision.

In their simplest form, Theories of change are expressed in the following form:

> *'**If** we do X (action), **then** we will produce Y (change/shift towards peace, justice, security)'*
>
> *or*
>
> *'We believe that by doing X (action) successfully, we will produce Y (movement towards a desired goal)'*

Of course, not all theories can be expressed by such simple statements. A theory of change might be expressed as 'If we do X, Y and Z, it will lead to W', or 'If we do X, it will lead to Y, which will lead to Z, which might possibly lead to W'.

It is often helpful and clarifying to extend the statement a bit further by adding at least some of the rationale or logic in a "because" phrase. This then produces the formula:

> '***If*** we do X…, ***then*** Y..., ***because*** Z….'

For instance, one theory of change for a post-war programme aimed at promoting employment for ex-combatant youth might be as follows:

> '***If*** we provide employment for ex-combatant youth, ***then*** we will reduce the likelihood of inter-communal violence, ***because*** unemployed youths are the most likely to be recruited into fighting, many still hold weapons and remain connected to their command structures.'

The following points expand on the definition above and help clarify how a theory of change works:

[2] *Ibid* p. 30.

1. Most programming in fragile states and conflict zones is fundamentally about **change processes**, which involve political dynamics and risk taking for progress to reduce state fragility and increase security for citizens (among other things). Because such efforts entail change, we need to be aware of how we think that change will come about—and how our actions will encourage or induce significant differences in the situation.
2. A theory of change can also be considered a **testable hypothesis**. There are few proven approaches in peacebuilding, justice and security; most of what we do must be continuously monitored to see if we are having the results we hope for and expect. Evaluations can assess whether the prevailing theories of change are appropriate to local conditions and constraints.
3. An important element of the theory of change is the **context**. How change can or will occur in one context cannot be automatically transferred to another setting. Transformation towards peace, justice and security will be different, for instance, in a single-party repressive state and a multi-party democracy. This also leads to the conclusion that theories of change must be linked to a robust **conflict analysis**, in order to ensure that programming addresses the key drivers of conflict and fragility in the context.
4. Programmatic efforts ('certain actions' in the definition at the beginning of this section) can be interpreted at several **different levels**. These range from the strategic or policy level, through broad sectoral or program levels, to project-level theories, and finally micro-level theories about specific limited activities. Each of these is further explained and examples provided in Section II below.

1.2 Uses of theories of change

Theories of change are useful for the following reasons:

- Theories of change are an essential element of **programme logic** and **rationale** for why we propose to work with X group, at Y time, using Z approach (related to the business case). Exploration of theories of change can help us complete a logical framework.
- Making a theory of change explicit allows us to reveal our **assumptions** about how change works, and why the chosen programmatic priorities or project framework functions better than others. Revealing these assumptions also helps identify **gaps** and unmet **needs**, including additional necessary activities or actors that should be engaged. We may also detect activities that are extraneous, weak or fail to contribute to achieving the overall goal.
- A theory of change can contribute to the development, among diverse stakeholders, of a **common understanding** regarding what will be accomplished and support more informed decision-making.
- Work with theories of change ensures **strong programme design**, which will lead to more robust strategies for change, by forcing a focus on results (changes) instead of activities or favourite approaches.
- Articulating clear theories of change helps with **monitoring and evaluation,** as the intended changes and the actions to achieve them are specified at the start of the project. This supports on-going analysis of the effectiveness of programming, as well as a final evaluation.

1.3 Relationship to evidence and research literature

There is great variation across the crime, justice, security and peace sectors regarding the degree to which the full range of programme approaches has been carefully studied and either validated or invalidated. For instance, in the peacebuilding field, there is a body of literature regarding 'contact theory'—the notion that bringing people together across conflict lines for various kinds of interaction will reduce negative perceptions and tensions. However, most other approaches have not been studied with equal intensity or rigor. Nevertheless, it is often useful, before embarking on a programme in the context of conflict and fragility, to know what others have discovered in other settings in relation to key theories of change. Within the peacebuilding field, efforts are underway to make some of the best literature and research more readily available[3]. Similar efforts have been undertaken in the security and justice sectors[4].

[3] See Babbitt, E., Chigas, D. & Wilkinson, R. (2013) *Theories and Indicators of Change: Concepts and Primers* (Washington, D.C.: USAID).

[4] See, for example, OECD, *OECD Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*, Section 10: Monitoring and Evaluation (Paris: OECD) p. 30-32, http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/the-oecd-dac-handbook-on-security-system-reform_9789264027862-en.

2 Theories of Change at Different Levels

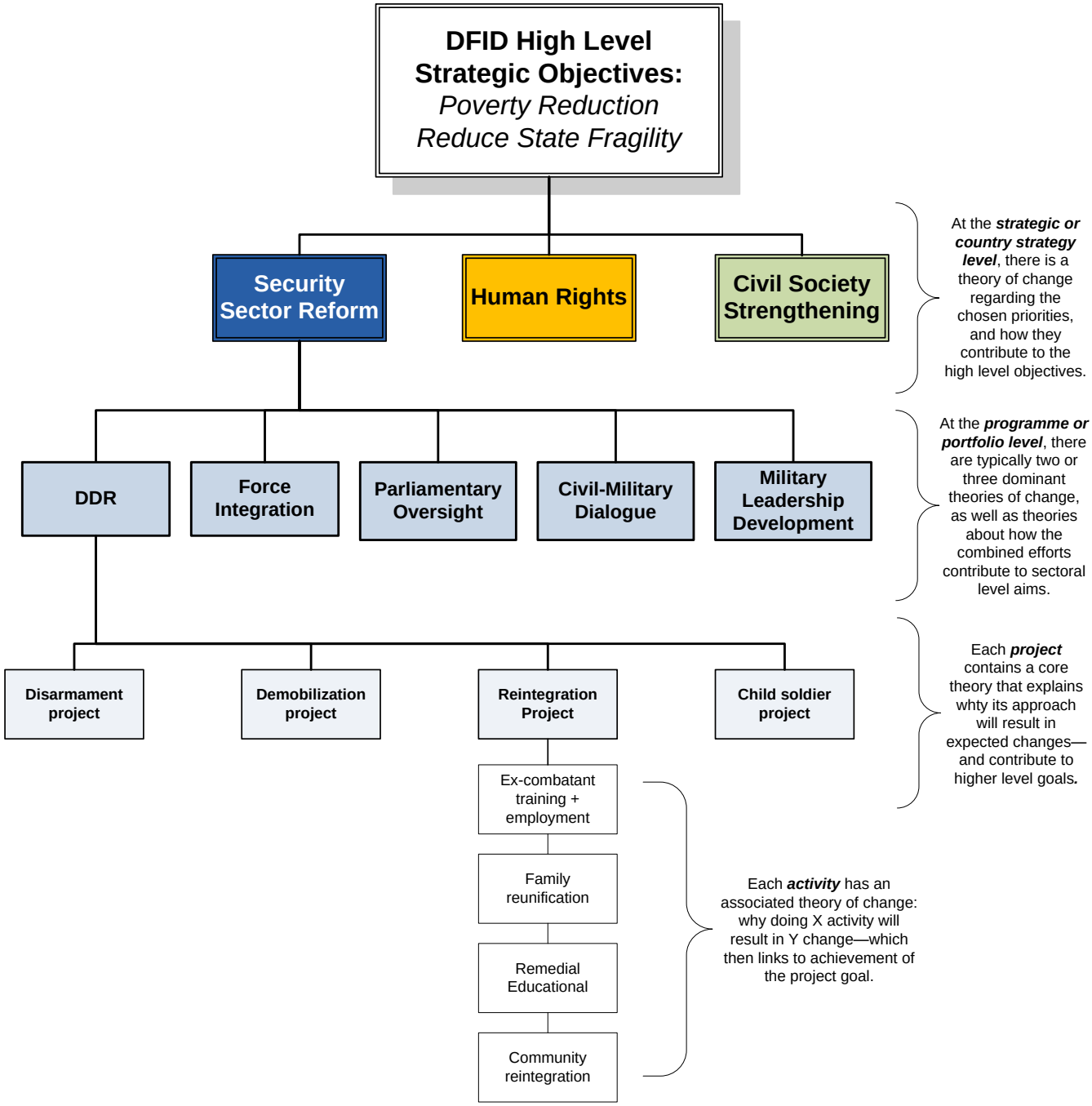
Most of the literature and practical guidance on theories of change focus on the activity and project levels; relatively little has been said about theories of change at higher levels, which often drive the choice of major funding areas the priority programming areas of individual donors and/or the international community. This document will address those lacunae and explore how theories of change operate at those larger levels. Recent experience, including the multi-donor evaluations commissioned by the OECD DAC[5], has revealed the utility of considering these higher levels.
In this document, we will examine theories of change at four levels:

- **Strategic Level:** What is the change logic that informs the choice of priority areas within a country strategy (formal or informal)—and why other options were not chosen?
- **Portfolio/Sector/Programme Level:** What are the two or three dominant theories of change embedded in the programming within the sector/portfolio? How will the combined efforts of the range of funded projects achieve desired changes (results) within a priority area?
- **Project Level:** What is the core theory of change informing the project approach? How will reaching the project goal/objective contribute to the larger goals/objectives at the sector/programme level?
- **Activity Level:** How will the activity (training, dialogue…) produce the intended micro-level change(s) and, ultimately, lead to the project objectives/goals?

Figure 1 below provides a graphic depiction of different levels of theories of change from individual activities through projects, sectors/portfolios to the strategic level. In essence, the various theories of change explain how lower level results contribute to higher level objectives, often referred to as the 'hierarchy of results' in results-based management. The section below clarifies each level and provides examples.

[5] Several multi-donor evaluations carried out between 2008 and 2011 by OECD DAC can be found at http://www.oecd.org/document/23/0,3746,en_21571361_34047972_35263575_1_1_1_1,00.html. See also OECD DAC (2012) *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Learning for Results, Op. Cit.*

Figure 1: Theories of change at various levels



DESIRED/EXPECTED CHANGES can be identified at each level.
Every level, therefore, incorporates underlying assumptions (theories) about how the chosen priorities, programmes, projects or activities will produce the expected changes.

2.1 Strategic level theories of change

At the highest level, donor organizations like DFID operate under several quite broad and high level strategic objectives. Generally these are long-term goals, such as 'poverty reduction' or 'strengthening of fragile states'. These derive from national interests, broadly or narrowly defined, as well as humanitarian principles and government commitments. In practical terms, these high level objectives must be defensible to the taxpaying public and Parliament as their representatives. While we could

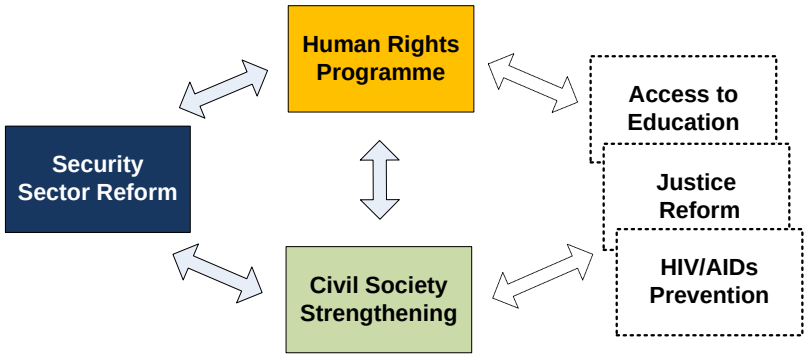
examine the theories of change that lie behind these high level strategic objectives, that consideration is beyond the scope of this document. We will start, therefore, at the country programme level and strategic priorities established within that framework.

A theory of change may explain why one or more donors, the 'international community' or government bodies, have established certain **strategic priority areas** or adopted a particular **policy approach** to address peacebuilding, crime, justice and security.

Typical strategic priorities aim at 'national reconciliation' or 'security sector reform' or 'successful completion of a DDR process' or "achievement of constitutional reform' or 'improving the quality of and access to justice'. Each of these is stated in a fairly vague manner without specifying desired changes. It helps to be more precise about what specific and observable changes would come about if such programming were effective, and then to indicate how achievement of those changes will contribute to attainment of less fragility and more peace and security, linking to an analysis of the key factors of conflict or state fragility. Therefore, we can explore the theory of change associated with each of the programmatic 'headlines' like those listed to indicate the priority area (DDR, SSR…) and then expected changes and associated theory or theories of change.

We can look at the theory(ies) of change that lie behind the choice of one set of priorities over another. Figure 2 gives an example, in which the chosen priorities are security sector reform, human rights and civil society strengthening. At the same time, other potential priorities, such as access to education, justice reform, and HIV/AIDs prevention have not been chosen. In a given context—and in relation to a conflict analysis or other form of context analysis—it is possible to identify the theories of change that lie behind the chosen priorities, individually and in combination.

Figure 2: Example of country-level strategic priorities



In the Figure 2 example, we might develop an overarching theory of change supporting the three priorities along these lines:

> In the context of post-war peace consolidation, it is necessary to address the security concerns of the population, as a first priority on which all other progress depends. At the same time, decades of human rights abuses were an important driver of the recent civil war, and it is essential to demonstrate government commitments to the respect for human rights and observable improvements in access to political and economic power. Finally, the trust between citizens and the government has been eroded by post-independence predatory regimes, in which case increasing the ability of civil society to hold government accountable represents an important step towards renewed trust. Together, progress in these three priority areas will constitute a powerful advance towards sustainable peace.

In the recent past, we find that the international community and donors have pursued specific priorities in several contexts of conflict and fragility. For instance, in Kosovo, donors focused on support for the return of Serbian refugees by funding programmes of community acceptance and a wide range of multi-ethnic initiatives. "The multiple aid and development programmes were directly linked to implementation of internationally-established 'Standards for Kosovo' and widely held beliefs regarding refugee returns, inter-ethnic relations, and a future multi-ethnic state as the basis for peacebuilding."[6] In this case, a dominant theory of change (amongst several others) behind this approach of the international community was the following:

> "... involving Kosovar Serbs and Albanians in mutual discussions, [we] can develop the conditions for the safe, successful and peaceful return of IDPs to their homes. This, in turn, will promote reintegration, stabilisation of the environment and will reverse one of the negative consequences of the conflict."[7]

A study of peacebuilding programming in Kosovo found that this assumption (and others) proved invalid in the context, despite the fervent wishes of the donor community[8].

In South Sudan a telling report from a joint donor evaluation of peacebuilding work[9] identified several strategic priorities: (i) socioeconomic development, (ii) good governance, (iii) reform of justice and security institutions, and (iv) culture of justice, truth and reconciliation—and concluded that these were not all aligned with the most pressing peacebuilding needs. The same report uncovered and critiqued a dominant theory of change at the strategic level.

> A dominant 'theory of change' emerged from the 2005 Joint Assessment Mission, in which it was implied that lack of development was in itself a cause of conflict. Hence the theory is that 'all development contributes to CPPB' [conflict prevention and peace-building], encapsulated in the term 'peace dividend'. The logic seems to be that development is not only a reward for peace…but that failure to deliver a 'peace dividend' could lead to conflict. The evidence for such a claim appears to come from studies on conflict prevention and peacebuilding conducted in other parts of the world, but the link between delivering services and abating violence is not found in Southern Sudan, despite this being the dominant paradigm that informs the aid operations. In Southern Sudan a more precise identification of the causes of conflict is needed[10].

2.2 Sector or portfolio level theories of change

As at the strategic priority level above, we can look at theories of change at the sector or portfolio level from two perspectives. First, we can identify one or more theories of change operating at the sectoral level. Second, looking across the various programme elements, we can usually identify two or three dominant theories of change that underlie all or most of the interventions within the sector. In addition, we can examine the assumptions that determine the *combination* of efforts within the sector—in other words, how the funded interventions will add up to the overall goals for change within the sector. This last element is explored further in Section 4.

---

[6] OECD DAC (2012) *Op. Cit.* p. 83.
[7] OECD DAC (2012) *Op. Cit.* p. 83.
[8] Chigas, D., *et al* (2006) *Has Peacebuilding Made a Difference in Kosovo? A Study of the Effectiveness of Peacebuilding in Preventing Violence: Lessons Learned from the March 2004 Riots in Kosovo* (Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects).
[9] Bennett, J., Pantuliano, S., Fenton, W., Vaux, A., Barnett, C. & Brusset , E. (2010) *Aiding the Peace: A Multi-Donor Evaluation of Support to Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities in Southern Sudan 2005 – 2010* (United Kingdom: ITAD Ltd.).
[10] *Ibid* p. xv.

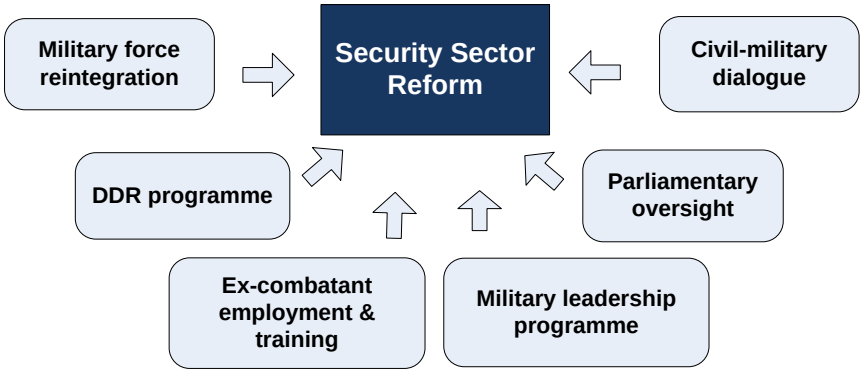
In terms of a sectoral level theory of change, we can identify the sectoral goal or objective and the series of approaches or programmes that comprise the portfolio of interventions in the sector. At this broad level, then, we can specify the changes we expect as a result of the series of programmatic efforts and articulate an overall theory of change for the sector. This can be presented in a table like the following.

Table 1: Illustrative Example: Security Sector Reform

Sectoral Goal: By 20xx, the population views the security forces (military, police and other security services) as accountable, professional, legitimate, and responsive to civilian control.		
Portfolio of Approaches	**Expected Changes**	**Theory of Change**
DDR Force integration Parliamentary oversight Civil-military dialogue Military leadership development	Citizens throughout the country live in greater physical security and feel increased psychological security. Citizens show more willingness to cooperate with security forces in combating crime. Mechanisms of civilian control and other means of accountability are in place and functioning. Security forces demonstrate professionalism.	***If*** we achieve a combination of greater professionalism, specific operating mechanisms of accountability and actual increases in security, ***then*** citizens will develop greater trust for and cooperation with security forces.

In the table above and as shown in Figure 3 below, a portfolio of programmes within a security sector reform (SSR) priority usually includes a range of complementary efforts, each of which would contribute to an overall goal for the SSR effort.

Figure 3: Example of a security sector reform programme portfolio



The donor has then developed an array of programmes that individually and together are assumed to contribute to attainment of the goal. We might find several theories of change underlying these programmes.

> ***If*** we develop specific mechanisms of civilian control, establish effective measures for changing the attitudes of military leaders and ensure that they adhere to principles of democracy and human rights, ***then*** military forces will gain the respect and trust of the general population.
>
> ***If*** non-state armed groups [rebel groups, informal militias…] are either demobilized or integrated into the regular armed forces, ***then*** incidents of violence will decrease and the actual security and sense of security of the population will increase, ***because*** the current

state of chaos, lawlessness and confusion causes citizens to protect themselves by any means at their disposal.

If we provide training and employment opportunities for ex-combatant youth, ***then*** we will reduce the likelihood of inter-communal violence, ***because*** unemployed youths represent a threat to peace, as they are the most likely to be recruited into fighting, many still hold weapons and remain connected to their command structures.

2.3 Project level theory of change[11]

A theory of change can explain how **achievement of the stated goal or strategic objective of a limited project/programme** will contribute to a larger societal-level peace (Peace Writ Large) or a reduction in state fragility. The question is, if we manage to achieve the goals/objectives, how will that promote sustainable progress towards a locally defined vision of peace or greater security/justice? In many cases, the achievement of the goal is 'necessary but not sufficient'. In which case, we can ask what additional or parallel efforts are needed to consolidate peace or security?

Table 2: Illustrative Example: Reintegration of ex-combatants into communities

Project Goal	Expected Changes	Theory of Change
Ex-combatants become socially integrated in their original or new communities that accept them as equal and productive members of society.	Ex-combatants regain citizen status and obtain civilian employment. Local communities welcome the return or arrival of ex-combatants. Violent events that occurred during warfare are addressed and reconciled. Incidents of renewed violence are reduced.	***If*** ex-combatants are trained in appropriate skills and provided employment, and processes for dealing with the past are effective, ***then*** communities will accept ex-combatants as full members, and the likelihood of renewed violence will be reduced.

This example includes processes for dealing with the past—specifically violent incidents that occurred during the war. This kind of transitional justice effort is not usually included in DDR programmes, or may be undertaken in parallel but not directly linked. Thus it would be important to determine whether reconciliation efforts are being implemented and dealing effectively with divisive history.

Note that the expected changes are first stated at the outcome level (civilian status, skills, employment, welcoming communities...). The impact level, involving observable reduction in violence, would only be achieved over time. It is at the impact level that we find the expected contribution to a broader societal vision. In this case, it will be important to track whether successful completion of project activities and achievement of the intermediate changes actually result in reductions in violence. Or are there other factors driving levels of violence that are not addressed by this project? Do other projects address them in parallel? (See 'portfolio logic' in Section 4.)

Any project may operate on more than one theory of change. One theory might address the approach taken (methodology), while another addresses the choice of project participants or the timing of the effort. Of course, these can be combined into a single statement: 'If we work with X groups applying Y approach at Z time, we will achieve W results'.

[11] There is often confusion over the use of the term 'programme' and 'project'. However, in project and programme management the distinction is clear. Programme refers to a suite or portfolio of efforts within a sector that typically lasts several years. A project is a more discrete, limited initiative with a shorter timeframe.

One Project – Several theories of change
Some projects use a limited number of activities to serve multiple purposes. For example, a project involving the construction of a water well in a village in Burundi could be linked to the following theories of change:

- ***By*** providing access to a closer water source, ***we will*** improve safety (less danger of assault or rape, as is the case in many refugee camps) and health (improved sanitation, no contamination in drinking water, ability to cook with water).
- ***If*** there is closer access to water, ***then*** children can attend school instead of having to travel for hours to provide water for the family.
- ***If*** we teach locals how to build water wells, ***then*** they can repeat the process in neighbouring villages, thus spreading access to water throughout the region.

2.4 Activity level theories of change[12]

A theory of change may explain why **single events or activities** within a project are presumed to be effective in a particular context (that is, why it will create an anticipated change). Within the Reintegration Project above, we would expect to find a wide range of activities, each of which would have its own associated theory of change. We will look at a couple of illustrative examples.

Assuming that the setting is a largely rural agricultural society, an ex-combatant training and employment programme would likely focus on providing agricultural skills and arranging for employment in agricultural enterprises or land acquisition for small holder farming.

Table 3: Example 1 - Ex-combatant training in agricultural skills

Activity	Expected Changes	Theory of Change
Training of volunteer ex-combatant youths (ages 18-30) in key skills for agricultural production, including subsistence crops and products with commercial value.	Significant numbers of ex-combatant youths gain sufficient skills to support their families through subsistence farming and/or commercial production of selected crops.	***If*** ex-combatant youth are provided appropriate agricultural skills, ***then*** they will be prepared to find employment in the agricultural sector.

Typical assumptions (theories!) about the efficacy of training underlie this example. In order to judge the validity of this activity, it would be necessary to determine if other needed activities are planned, such as job placement services, assistance with land acquisition, micro-credit services, and a follow-up mentoring process. There would be questions, therefore, whether training *alone* will generate the expected changes. These issues would prompt a broad look at the project activities as a whole.

A second activity within the broader Reintegration Project might address the actual process of reinsertion of ex-combatant youth trainees (graduates of the training process above) into various communities. Such an effort might focus on gaining access to land for farming, a potentially sensitive

[12] In the literature, this level is sometimes referred to as a 'programme' theory of change—referring to *programmatic* activities. For the purposes of this document, we call this lowest or micro level the 'activity level', to avoid confusion with the portfolio or programme level.

endeavour, as issues of land tenure are typically fraught in post-war settings, and communal and individual titles may be contested for many reasons.

Table 4: Example 2 - Community reinsertion of ex-combatant youth trainees

Activity	Expected Changes	Theory of Change
Identify local communities where ex-combatant agricultural trainees intend to return or relocate and negotiate with local authorities for access to land for the trainees, as well as mentoring support from experienced local farmers.	When trainees leave the training programme, they will have access to land for farming and local mentoring support—with firm cooperation from the local community.	***If*** we engage community leaders directly in issues of ex-combatant reinsertion, including land use and mentoring, ***then*** they will be more likely to provide on-going support to new/returned community members.

A number of theories and assumptions are embedded in this approach. One of them is about direct involvement of community leaders, and whether this approach will actually result in greater sustained cooperation. This hypothesis would need to be tested in actual practice. In addition, the approach incorporates assumptions about the need for on-going mentoring, perhaps assuming that if the community invests in the new or returned members, they will have a stake in their success—which would also need to be tracked. Ultimately, it would be necessary to assess whether the ex-combatant trainees were able to engage in successful and sustained agricultural activities and to support their families.

3 How to Develop a Theory of Change

The theory of change is best developed at the beginning of a planning process. It informs the goals, objectives, and activities **throughout the cycle**. However, a theory of change can be developed or amended at a later stage. Conflict situations tend to be volatile and dynamic in nature. A project must sometimes **shift its focus or strategy** to remain relevant to the situation on the ground. In that case, it will be important to adopt a revised theory or theories of change as well. Unfortunately, this ideal is not always reflected in practice. Many efforts fail to develop theories of change at the beginning of the project cycle, if at all, and many others neglect the on-going process of adaptation. It is **never too late to develop a theory of change**; it can be useful during all stages of the programming cycle.

3.1 Who Should Be Involved in Developing Theories of Change?

Before looking at the practical steps for developing theories of change, it is important to address the important issue of WHO should be involved in developing these theories.

The process of developing theories of change benefits from the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders. While such participation is desirable and may increase the quality of the theories, it may be constrained by risk factors or political sensitivities.

At the outset, DFID advisers can involve associated programme colleagues in the field and in headquarters in generating first draft statements. Once initial drafts have been developed, it would be beneficial to seek feedback from other donors, civil society organizations and relevant national government ministries. Consultation with these groups outside of DFID can provide a reality check and help uncover problems with a theory of change. This process can help reveal differences in assumptions of varying individuals and organizations that may be involved in programme implementation. Ideally, consultation processes can be used to get everyone on the same page regarding how a strategy, programme or project will contribute to peace, security and justice.

3.2 A Step-by-Step Process for Developing a Theory of Change Statement

Overall Outline of Steps

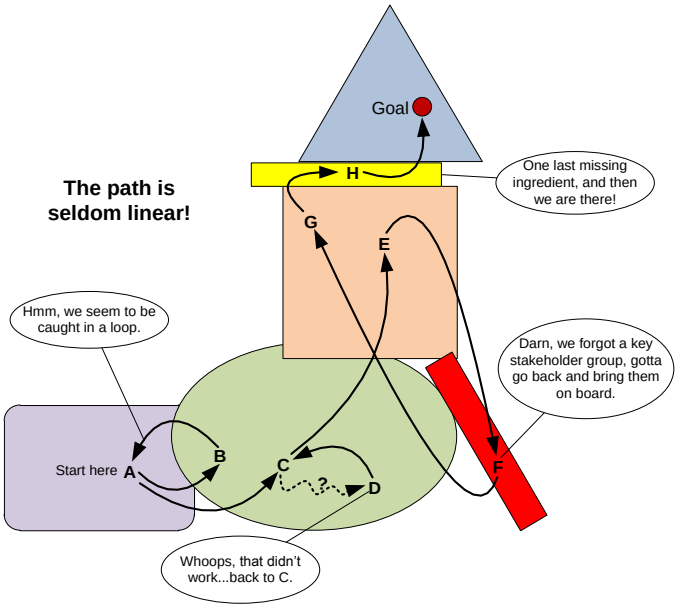
1. Identify all of the change/changes expected or desired;
2. Articulate how the changes will come about as a result of programming efforts; and
3. Develop one or more 'If X...then Y, because...' statements—or more involved articulations.

Step One: Identify Expected Changes

The first step involving identifying the **full range of expected changes** from the programming effort or efforts you are working with. For an individual project, this might be a limited set of fairly discrete changes; at the strategic or portfolio level, these should be larger building blocks, leaving out the details embedded at the project or activity level.

A brainstormed list of all expected changes can be arranged in a **sequence** with the highest level of expected result at the top, recognising that the process is seldom linear, as events unfold and conflict or other dynamics require in-stream changes in strategy—and associated theories of change. In any case, more modest and shorter-term changes can be shown to support medium-term accomplishments and then longer-term goals, all in eventual pursuit of a long-term vision. This is comparable to the 'hierarchy of results' associated with results-based management, although that concept is often interpreted (unnecessarily) as a linear progression. In reality, it is usually a messier series of actions, missteps, and iterations.

Figure 4: The path of change is seldom clear



Example: A programme dedicated to reducing gender-based discrimination in hiring, retention and salary levels, focuses on passing an anti-discrimination law. Programme participants identify, in no particular order, the following potential or necessary changes: individual women feel empowered to voice their opinions; legislators are persuaded to act; information on current disparities in hiring and salaries is readily available; women's networks are mobilised; key women legislators are organized to take action; draft legislation is developed; lobbying activities are undertaken by mothers / sisters / daughters / wives to male decision makers; surveys track shifts in public opinion. *This list includes a mix of activities and results!* Therefore, a first task will be to eliminate the activities from the list, focusing only on the intended changes resulting from the activities. These can then be organised in a logical sequence, such as:

Table 5: Sample chart of expected changes - gender-based discrimination project

Empowered women are able to voice their concerns and opinions
Women's groups and networks are mobilised to undertake advocacy campaigns
Public opinion shifts in favour of an anti-discrimination law
Key decision makers are persuaded to support new law
New anti-discrimination legislation passed

While many activities will be required to achieve these results, this then focuses on the logical sequence of changes leading to the goal.

In this process, it is often useful to consider the **types of changes** that may be sought at various levels—as well as **who** may be expected to experience or instigate change. One way of understand this is the spectrum of change described in Figure 5, which can prompt specific thinking about intended results[13].

[13] Adapted from the 'RPP Matrix', explained further in CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (2012) *Reflecting on Peace Practice Program Participant Manual* (Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects), http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/project_profile.php?pid=RPP&pname=Reflecting%20Peace%20Practice.

Figure 5: Types of changes at different levels

	CHANGES IN:
INDIVIDUAL / PERSONAL CHANGES	Healing/recovery Perceptions/attitudes Skills Behaviour Individual relationships
SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES	Inter-group behaviour/relationships Public opinion Social norms Social mobilisation Institutions (formal/informal) Structures Culture

In the example above regarding an anti-discrimination law, the sequence of changes starts at the individual level, then leads to socio-political changes, including mobilisation of groups, changes in public opinion, shifts in attitudes of key decision makers, and ultimately a new law (an institutional change).

Note: In this example, the longer-term goal is a reduction in gender-based discrimination. It would be useful to ask, therefore, whether passage of a new law will achieve that, in itself, and what additional initiatives will be needed. The discussion of the theory of change behind the campaign for the new law prompts strategic thinking about how this effort contributes to the broader and longer-term change.

Step Two: Articulate How Changes Will Occur

Having identified the kinds of changes expected, it becomes possible to explore **how** these will come about in the context, taking into account conflict dynamics, political trends, decision-making processes, and so forth. In most cases, this step focuses on the approach or methodology used, and how it functions in the cultural/political environment—as well as who is engaged.

Returning to our example, we can consider each of the expected changes and identify how it will come about. One way to do this is through a simple chart.

Table 6: Expected changes and how they will happen

Expected changes	How they will happen
Empowered women are able to voice their concerns and opinions	Training, followed by mentoring and accompaniment during follow-up activities
Women's groups and networks are mobilised to undertake advocacy campaigns	Well-resourced groups organised and facilitated by core structures and supported with technical assistance and funding
Public opinion shifts in favour of an anti-discrimination law	A campaign of public education, coupled with nonviolent action demonstrations and persistent attention by radio and TV
Key decision makers are persuaded to support new law	Lobbying effort of mothers/sisters/daughters/wives approaching male decision makers, and activation of female legislators group.

Step Three: Develop One or More 'If X…, then Y…, because…' Statements

At this step, we can use the list of expected changes and the ideas about how change will occur to develop one or more statements following the format: 'If we do X [action], then Y [movement towards goal] will result, because…'. Remember that more elaborate statements may be needed, such as: 'If we do X, Y and Z, it will result in W' or 'If we do A, it will lead to B, which will lead to C, and finally D'. The number and complexity of the statements will depend on the situation and the level of theory of change being addressed. A single project activity might have a fairly simple theory of change, whereas for a larger programme goal or strategic level, the theory of change could be more involved.

In our example, we would need to articulate, first, the overall theory of change of the project. Thus, a theory of change at the overall project level might be something like: *'If we can achieve passage of a strong anti-discrimination law, it will provide the basis for enforcement actions and further public education, leading to increases in fair employment practices'.* Note that this statement recognises that the law is perhaps necessary but not sufficient, and that parallel or follow-on activities will be necessary to achieve the goal.

For the activity level, we can simply add another column to the table, inserting activity level theories of change in the third column.

Table 7: Changes, how they happen and theories of change

Expected changes	How changes will happen	Activity Level Theory of Change
Empowered women are able to voice their concerns and opinions	Training, followed by mentoring and accompaniment during follow-up activities	***If*** women are trained and provided ongoing support, ***then*** they will become articulate advocates of change.
Women's groups and networks are mobilised to undertake advocacy campaigns	Well-resourced groups organized and facilitated by core structures and supported with technical assistance and funding	***If*** we mobilize and resource civil society organisations, including women's groups, ***then*** they will become effective forces for policy changes.
Public opinion shifts in favour of an anti-discrimination law	A campaign of public education, coupled with nonviolent action and persistent attention by radio and TV	***If*** the public is provided with accurate and regular information, made visible through dramatic action, ***then*** they will support fairness in legislation and enforcement.
Key decision makers are persuaded to support new law	Lobbying effort of mothers/sisters/daughters/wives approaching male decision makers, and activation of female legislators group.	***If*** we approach male decision makers through people who are close to them; ***then*** they will be persuaded to support change and vote for the new law.

Each of these theories of change—at both the project and activity levels—becomes a *testable hypothesis* that can be tracked through a monitoring and evaluation system.

4 Examining Logic, Logical Frameworks & Reality Checks

In Section 2 above, we explored the levels of programming. We also noted two considerations: a) the underlying theory/theories of change; and b) the degree to which different activities, projects, programmes/sectors or broader priorities add up to the desired changes, using theories of change as a lens. In Section 3, we explored the first of these considerations and the practical steps in articulating a theory of change. In this section we will look at the question of whether and how things add up, how theories of change fit with logframes, as well as questions related to reality checks. Thus we will explore the following issues, each of which is further explained below.

- First, in terms *of* **project logic, programme logic or sectoral logic**, do the planned initiatives add up to the goal/objective—or are there significant gaps or leaps of logic? Are the combined theories of change sound?
- Second, how do theories of change relate to **logical frameworks** commonly used by donors and other funders.
- Second, how will the social and political **systems push back** against efforts for positive change? If they will, how can we take account of those dynamics in our planning?
- Third, how does a relatively contained effort (even if it is large and well-funded!) relate to other initiatives in the same or related areas of work, in terms of necessary **complementarities or duplication** of effort?
- Finally, is the effort **conflict sensitive**, or is there danger that the intervention will cause harm—due, at least partly, to faulty theories of change?

4.1 Probing programmatic logic at different levels

Exploring Project Logic

At a project level and using identified theories of change, we can examine whether and how a whole ***series of actions*** or a ***general programmatic approach*** will achieve a stated project goal or objective. As noted, we may discover that there are gaps or leaps of logic in the project design[14].

Continuing with the example in Section 3 above, we can use Table 7 above (which shows changes, approaches and theories of change) to explore the project logic. The essential series of project steps in that example are as follows:

Figure 6: Project logic for changes described in Table 7 above

Would the process likely unfold this way? What might get in the way? Are there significant steps missing? Do we think that any of the theories of change are weak or unfounded? If so, how might they be strengthened?

[14] In the classic literature this exercise is often referred to as an assessment of the 'programme logic'. We are avoiding that term to avoid confusion between the project and programme levels.

Figure 7: Project logic in relation to theories of change

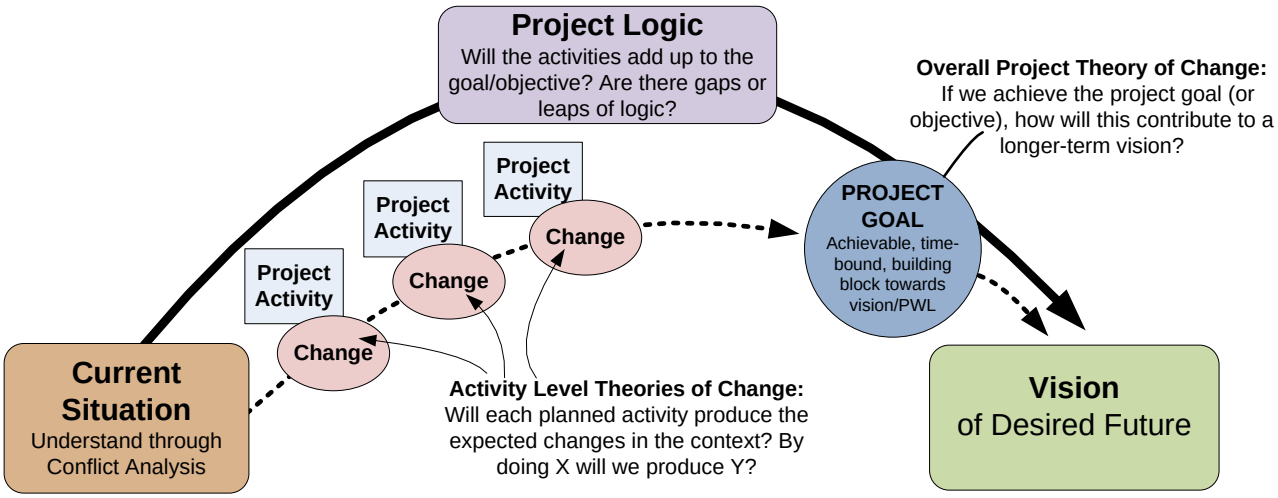


Figure 7 shows how project logic is related to the activity level and project level theories of change. The project logic expresses the overarching strategy of the effort, essentially a pathway for getting from the current situation to the desired future. Along the way, specific activities must result in a series of changes that, together, add up to the project goal, which is itself a stepping stone (intermediate result) towards a longer-term vision for Peace Writ Large. The dotted line (pathway of change) indicates the need to constantly test whether the theories of change are proving valid in the situation.

Examining Strategic, Portfolio or Sectoral Level Logic

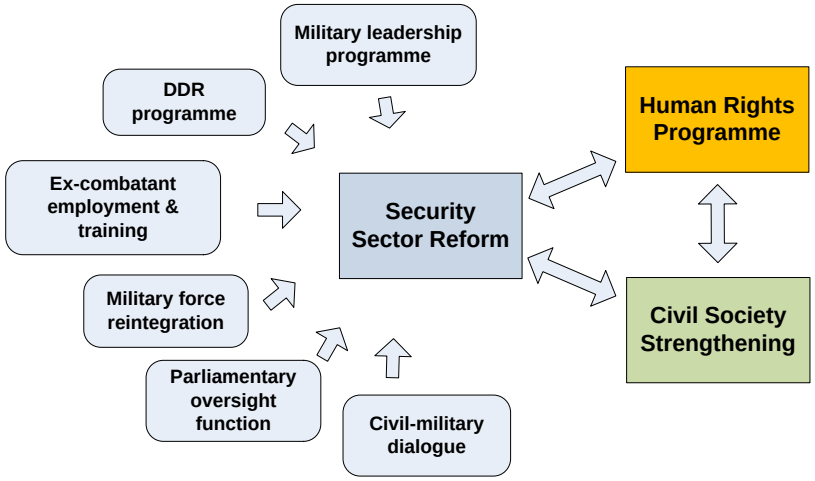
At the portfolio or sectoral level, we are concerned with how various theories of change (which are also embedded in the individual projects) interact with each other, and how they combine into a convincing theory for attainment of the higher level goal for the sector or larger strategy. It should also be noted that these theories and the goal itself often reflect not only a theory of change, but certain beliefs or even philosophies about good governance, the rule of law and the 'package' of what is referred to as the 'liberal peace'—which may or may not be appropriate to the conflict context. For instance, civilian control of the military is well accepted in Western democracies, but is rarely observed in practice in most fragile states, even if enshrined in law or military doctrine. Again, the embedded theories of change, once made explicit, can then be tested and validated or proven invalid over time.

At the strategic or portfolio level, theories of change can be used to assess whether and how the constellation of projects in a sector or portfolio work together or the range of chosen priorities will add up to the intended goals for a sector or for the larger donor country strategy.

A donor country strategy and the UN Development Assistance Framework, for example, each represent a set of priorities, usually established in cooperation with the national government. At this level, as discussed in Section 2, we can explore the theories of change of each established priority, the rationale for seeking changes in those areas instead of others. Now we consider the additional question of whether and how the various priorities add up to a reasonable overarching strategy for positive change.

Figure 8 helps to illustrate two levels of consideration: the portfolio or sector level and strategic priority level.

Figure 8: Strategic priorities and sectoral portfolio/programmes



The left-hand side of the diagram depicts a range of initiatives within a broad security sector reform programme (as already discussed in Section 2). A donor might establish, within a country strategy or UNDAF, the security sector as a priority—and then fund some or all of the efforts shown. At the same time, the donor might designate two or more additional priorities—in this case, civil society strengthening and human rights as parallel concerns.

Sector or Portfolio Logic

Similar to 'project logic', we can examine whether and how the initiatives within the sector add up to a desired high level goal for that area.

For instance, a goal for the security sector might be stated as:

> Citizens live without fear and in full confidence that the armed forces (army and police) act in their best interests, remaining neutral with regards to political life and responding to civilian authority.

In Figure 8 we see six separate (but related) efforts. Each of those efforts has a theory of change embedded in it—essentially a justification for why DDR, civil-military dialogue, force reintegration, and so forth, will contribute to the overall sectoral goal. We can then ask: Will these efforts add up to the stated goal, or is there something missing? Are any of the individual theories of change weak or unjustified in the situation—and therefore likely to fail? Will that weakness threaten the overall effort? If so, how would those individual elements need to be strengthened to help ensure the success of the sectoral programme?

Strategic Priority Level

At this level, we examine the broader priorities. The example in Figure 5 shows the choice of Security Sector Reform, Human Rights and Civil Society as priorities. In examining the logic at this level, we would ask: What are the general theories of change behind each of the priority areas? Are these the most effective priorities for moving towards greater peace and state solidity? How do these priorities relate to each other—and to the priorities of other donors and the host government? Together, will these efforts make significant progress towards security, justice and peace? Are there synergies or disturbing contradictions? Are there important gaps, including key drivers of conflict that remain unaddressed by anyone?

4.2 Theories of change and logical frameworks

There is some confusions about the difference between theories of change and logic models or the log-frame; are they the same thing or different? Some assume that theories of change should plausibly fit in the 'assumptions' column of the typical log-frame. Is a theory of change, in fact, simply a fancy word for an assumption? Others think that a theory of change is another term for 'programme strategy' and use it interchangeably with the entire range of programme planning tools.

Logic models (there are many of them!) generally require a *description* of a fairly linear set of steps in programming, typically some variation of: inputs → activities → outputs → outcomes → impacts (long-term outcomes). The purpose of the logframe is to enable examination of programme design, to ensure that planned activities will actually result in expected outcomes. Theories of change, on the other hand, can be treated less linearly and, at their best, demand an examination of why results will be attained—or why they were not reached. According to Clark and Anderson, "Theories of Change **also require justifications** at each step—you have to articulate the hypothesis about *why* something will cause something else."[15] As we have discussed earlier in this paper, theories of change explain how lower level changes result in higher level changes. Clark and Anderson (2004) go on to summarize the differences between logic models and theories of change:

Table 8: The differences between logic models and theories of change

Logic Models	Theories of Change
Representation	Critical thinking
List of components	Pathway of change
Descriptive	Explanatory

In essence, working with theories of change is a thinking discipline that can help ensure defensible programmatic strategies at multiple levels. The results of the thought process can be inserted into logical frameworks—in fact, if you have completed the reasoning process developing theories of change, it should be quite easy to complete a log-frame. Nevertheless, practitioners should remember that programming reality is seldom as neat and tidy as logical models would have us believe. A theory of change represents a testable hypothesis that should be monitored, validated or invalidated and adjusted constantly in a non-linear way suggested by systems thinking. In an evaluation, the logical framework might ask whether the intended results were obtained or not, but would not necessarily ask why or why not.

Table 9: Comparing the logic model and theory of change descriptions

Logic Model Description	Theory of Change Explanation
Women's groups were provided training in problem analysis, programme planning, public speaking, and lobbying. Evaluation showed that 30% of the trained groups engaged in effective advocacy for change.	Evaluation revealed that only 30% of trained women's groups took effective action. In those groups that engaged effectively, training was followed by coaching and accompaniment coupled with confident internal group leadership. Therefore, training alone was insufficient for action in this setting.

[15] Clark, H. & Anderson, A. (2004) *Theories of change and logic models: Telling them apart* Paper presented at the American Evaluation Association in Atlanta, GA, http://www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org/evaluation/resource/doc/TOCs_and_Logic_Models_forAEA.ppt.

4.3 Performing additional reality checks

Work for change in justice, security and peace is difficult, complex and often only achieves significant progress over time. In addition to considering whether and how various efforts combine to generate desired changes and to examining the project logic, we can also perform three additional important reality checks, using theories of change as a tool.

System Push Back

Conflict systems and deeply entrenched social and political systems are often quite resilient; they resist change, often quite effectively. In the given situation, how might the system oppose the proposed changes? Which groups benefit from the current situation and would lose from the desired changes? Are there deeply embedded cultural norms that will produce resistance to change? Will resistance be encountered in the form of overt action, or more subtle and passive behaviour? For instance, male legislators might acquiesce to an anti-discrimination law, in full expectation that there is no capacity to enforce it. If the system will push back, do we need to reconsider our strategy—and its associated theory of change?

At a programme, sector or strategic level, what are the systems of power, privilege or simply bureaucratic inertia that will impede significant progress—and that should cause us to reconsider our theories of change and programmatic approaches?

Complementarities, Divergences or Duplication

Programmes/projects should not be viewed in isolation. Are there other efforts running in parallel or in support of initiatives at different levels? Does our proposed action undermine another effort? Has our proposed effort been tried before—and, if so, with what results? Do the theories of change of the diverse efforts in the same domain/sector complement or contradict each other? What about the effects of initiatives in other sectors?

Do No Harm/Conflict Sensitivity

Flaws in the theory of change can endanger people. This is partly related to system push back as discussed above, but also simply due to backfiring or rebound effects. In other words, we can cause harm by miscalculating how change happens or misjudging the effects of a range of programmatic activities, such as whom we hire; and choices regarding project location, activities, participants/ beneficiaries, contractors/suppliers, etc. In high tension and conflict situations, every action, intervention, and event takes on exaggerated or symbolic significance, with the possibility of generating inadvertent negative effects. The chosen theories of change need to be tested against the reality of the situation, including who might respond and how[16].

4.4 Summary: qualities of a good theory of change

A theory of change highlights assumptions about the effect of certain interventions in a particular context. It captures the connections between the day-to-day work of the project and the broader changes it hopes to create. It makes the overall logic of the strategy, programme or project transparent. The theory of change provides a basis for subsequent evaluation of the intervention. It must therefore be discussed and reviewed on a regular basis.

[16] See the paper in this series of Guidance Products, *Monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity: Methodological challenges and practical solutions* (CARE International and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2013).

A good theory of change should meet the criteria listed below[17]. A good theory of change is:

1. **Change-oriented:** It makes explicit the intended/expected changes from the effort.
2. **Clear and complete:** It links activities to the intended change by revealing the assumptions and change logic in simple, understandable terms.
3. **Plausible:** It demonstrates logic and common sense and/or reflects research results—and shows how the effort will lead to the desired results without leaps or gaps.
4. **Testable:** It is specific enough to be tested for validity over time.
5. **Embedded in context:** It takes into account the broader context in which the intervention occurs and reflects the reality of change processes in that setting.
6. **Agreed:** As far as possible, it reflects agreement among relevant stakeholders.
7. **Dynamic:** It is amended/updated whenever circumstances alter substantially and there is a need for the intervention to change course—or on the basis of a mid-course review or evaluation.

[17] Thanks to Roland Dittli and Stefan Bächtold at swisspeace for articulating some of these criteria. See also Vogel, I. (2012) *Review of the use of 'Theory of Change' in international development*, Report to DFID, http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/mis_spc/dfid_toc_review_vogelv7.pdf.

Annex A: Glossary of Key Terms

Some of the definitions below are taken from the OECD DAC *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*[18]. In those cases, the entry is marked with [OECD] at the end of the definition.

Change process: An initiative or set of activities intended to promote improvement or positive transformation of conditions in an intended direction.

Conflict analysis: Identification of the causes of conflict, including underlying structural factors and more immediate triggers of violence. Conflict analysis usually includes a mix of attention to issues/factors and actors, and some frameworks include articulation of dynamics among actors and factors.

Context analysis: Broader identification of important dynamics and factors in a society or specific geographic area—of which conflict analysis is a subset. Contextual factors may interact with or contribute to conflict dynamics, but not all elements of the context are relevant to conflict.

Evaluation: The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision–making process of both recipients and donors. Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy or program. [OECD]

Formative evaluation: Evaluation intended to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programs. [OECD] Often called mid-term evaluation.

Summative evaluation: A study conducted at the end of an intervention (or a phase of that intervention) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced. Summative evaluation is intended to provide information about the worth of the program. [OECD]

Goal: The higher-order objective to which a development intervention is intended to contribute. [OECD] Usually seen as broader and longer term than an *objective,* although the terms are often confused or conflated.

Hierarchy of results: The assumed causal chain of effects due to programmatic efforts from inputs to activities, to outputs, to outcomes to longer-term impacts.

Impacts: Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. [OECD]

Indicator: Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.

Input: The financial, human, and material resources used for the development intervention. [OECD]

Monitoring: A continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an on-going development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.

Objective: Specific, measurable short- to medium-term desired result from a programmatic effort. Usually seen as more limited, specific and time-bound than a goal.

[18] OECD DAC (2010) *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management* (reprint) (Paris: OECD), http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/glossaryofkeytermsinevaluationandresultsbasedmanagement.htm.

Outcome: The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. [OECD]

Output: The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes. [OECD]

Overall theory of change: The fundamental underlying assumptions about how change will come about as a result of a programme or project. (Distinguished from micro or activity-level theories of change.)

Programme/project logic: The rationale behind a planned series of steps regarding what a project or programme will do and how it will do it. The programme logic should be able to explain why the various components will add up to the intended objective or goal.

Programme (**or project**) **theory**: At its simplest, a programme theory explains how a specific action causes an observable result or intermediate outcome. More complex programme theories explain how a whole series of actions result in higher level aims. (Note: similar to programme logic.)

Results chain: The causal sequence for a development intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired objectives beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes, impacts, and feedback. [OECD]

SMART goals: SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reasonable/Relevant, and Time-bound—although there are many variations on these terms.

Strategy and tactic: In general, a strategy consists of an idea or series of ideas about how to move from current conditions to a desired future state. A strategy is comprised of a whole arc of individual actions that are, in themselves, usually tactics. A tactic is a fairly limited method for obtaining an intermediate objective within a broader strategy.

Testable hypothesis: An assumption that can be researched to determine its validity or lack of validity. A theory of change represents an hypothesis about how change will occur in a specific setting—which can be tested to determine whether it is correct or not.

Theory of change: A set of beliefs about how change happens that explains why and how certain actions will produce desired changes in a given context, at a given time. [Adapted from OECD DAC, 2012]

Annex B: List of Resources

Annie E. Casey Foundation (2004) *Theory of Change: A Practical Tool for Action, Results and Learning*, Prepared by Organizational Research Services.

Babbitt, E., Chigas, D. and Wilkinson, R. (2013) *Theories and Indicators of Change: Concept and Primers*, Washington, D.C.: USAID.

CARE International UK (2012) *Guidance for Designing, Monitoring and Evaluating Peacebuilding Projects: Using Theories of Change*, CARE International, London. Available at http://www.careinternational.org.uk/research-centre/conflict-and-peacebuilding/227-guidance-for-designing-monitoring-and-evaluating-peacebuilding-projects-using-theories-of-change.

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (2012) *Reflecting on Peace Practice Participant Training Manual* CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Cambridge, MA. Available at http://cdainc.com.

Church, C. & Rogers, M. (2006) *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs*, Search for Common Ground, Washington, D.C.:. Available at http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilt/ilt_manualpage.html.

Clark, H. & Anderson, A. (2004) Theories of change and logic models: Telling them apart, Paper presented at the American Evaluation Association, Atlanta, GA. Available at http://www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org/evaluation/resource/doc/TOCs_and_Logic_Models_forAEA.ppt.

Funnell, S.. and Rogers, P. (2011) *Purposeful Program Theory: Effective Uses of Theories of Change and Logic Models*, Jossey-Bass/Wiley, San Francisco.

Lederach, J.P., Neufeldt, R. & Culbertson, H. (2007) *Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring and Learning Toolkit*, Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, Notre Dame University and Catholic Relief Services, South Bend, IN.

Mackinnon, A. & Amott, N. (2006) *Mapping Change: Using a Theory of Change to Guide Planning and Evaluation*, Grantcraft.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (2012) *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, Paris.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (2007) *Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*, Section 10: Monitoring and Evaluation, OECD DAC, Paris.

Retolaza Eguren, I. (2011) *Theory of Change: a thinking and action approach to navigate in the complexity of social change processes* UNDP Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean and Hivos – Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation, Panama City.

Vogel, I. (2012) Review of the Use of Theory of Change in International Development, Review Report and Practical Resources, developed for UK Department for International Development. Available at http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/mis_spc/dfid_toc_review_vogelv7.pdf.