

# Connect what you do to the change you want to see.

## Background

Carol Weiss · 1995 · W.K. Kellogg Foundation

A Theory of Change is a logic model that makes your impact strategy explicit – tracing the chain from resources and activities through to outputs, outcomes, and long-term change. It forces you to surface the assumptions that hold your model together.

## How to Run This

- 1 Start with Impact: define the long-term change you want to see in the world.
- 2 Work backwards: what outcomes lead to that impact? What outputs produce those outcomes?
- 3 Map your activities – the work you actually do – and the inputs that enable them.
- 4 Surface assumptions: what must be true at each step for the chain to hold?
- 5 Test the chain: could a sceptic break any link? Where is your evidence weakest?

## Facilitator Tips

### Common mistake

Confusing outputs with outcomes. "100 people trained" is an output; "graduates earning 30% more" is an outcome.

### What good looks like

Each assumption is explicitly named and testable. The weakest assumption is the highest-priority thing to validate.

### When to move on

When you can trace a clear causal chain from your resources to your impact statement.

## About Wade Institute

Wade Institute of Entrepreneurship is Australia's leading centre for entrepreneurial education, based at the University of Melbourne. The Studio is Wade's free, AI-powered innovation workshop platform – making 24 structured frameworks available to anyone, each one facilitated by Pete, an AI coach trained in Wade's methodology.

## Try this interactively in The Studio

Pete will help you trace the logic chain from your inputs to your impact and surface the assumptions holding your model together. You'll leave with a theory of change and a session report.

[studio.wadeinstitute.org.au](https://studio.wadeinstitute.org.au) →

## 1 INPUTS

What do you invest? Money, time, people, expertise.

## 2 ACTIVITIES

What programs, services, or actions will you run?

## 3 OUTPUTS

What do you produce? Units, sessions, users served.

## 4 OUTCOMES

What changes for your beneficiaries? Behaviour, skills, conditions.

## 5 IMPACT

What broader, long-term change results? The world you are working toward.



### LINK: INPUTS → ACTIVITIES

If we invest these inputs, then we can do these activities.

### LINK: ACTIVITIES → OUTPUTS

If we do these activities, then we will produce these outputs.

### LINK: OUTPUTS → OUTCOMES

If outputs reach people, then these outcomes will change.

### LINK: OUTCOMES → IMPACT

If outcomes accumulate, then this impact will result.