# Eight Questions: Building A Theory of Change

Here you will find a series of questions devised by Professor Liz Thomas to help you in developing a Theory of Change (ToC) using a logic chain and if-then narrative statements.

You can work through them on your own but they are discursive questions and you may find it better to do this as a group activity.

Further Theory of Change resources and examples are available in the [NERUPI Reflexive Cycle Toolkit](http://nerupi-dev.floatdesign.net/) for members.

**Scroll through the questions and write your answers in the text boxes below.**

### Q1: Define the longer term impact the intervention is aiming to achieve.

Think about the ultimate access, student success or progression goal your programme or activity is aiming to achieve or contribute to. For example, this may be about increasing the number of students from your target groups progressing to HE, staying in HE, being awarded firsts and 2:1s or taking up postgraduate study.

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| **LONGER TERM IMPACT** |
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### Q2: Identify the key content of your intervention.

What is or should be included in your programme or activity? Which are the key elements for achieving the impact you are working towards?

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| **INTERVENTION** |
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### Q3: Describe how the participants - and others - will benefit from taking part in the intervention.

What are the 'take-aways' from the programme or activity? Think about what you might ask them in a post-survey.  This may be things like more knowledge and understanding of a topic, more confidence or improved skills.

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| **SHORT TERM BENEFITS** |
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### Q4: Think about what you would like participants - and other parties - to do as a result of taking part in the intervention which will help in achievement of the longer term impact.

Medium term outcomes are about change; as Liz Thomas puts it, they are very often about "what it is you expect people to do differently" - whether those people are students, staff or other stakeholders. Medium term outcomes can be the hardest to identify but they are crucial in moving us from the short term outputs to the longer term impact. Remember, as well, that these are the medium term outcomes you are anticipating as a result - at least in part - of your intervention.

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| **MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES** |
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### Q5: Is this enough to achieve the desired impact? What else will need to happen for participants to move from where they are now to achieving the longer term goal?

Drawing on your discussion in Q4, this question helps you to recognise the gaps in your programme or activity (Q2). Is there other content you should or could include in your programme or activity - or in related initiatives - to help you achieve the medium term outcomes?

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| **INTERROGATION 1** |
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### Q6: Using your answers to the previous questions, write a theory of change statement for how participants will be changed by the intervention.

Your theory of change statement should be broadly in the form:

If we undertake these ***activities (Q2)***, then these ***short-term*** ***benefits (Q3)***will happen.  If we have these benefits, then these ***medium-term outcomes (Q4)*** will be achieved.  If we have these medium-term outcomes, then this ***longer-term impact (Q1)***will happen.

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| **THEORY OF CHANGE STATEMENT – DRAFT 1** |
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### Q7: Review your theory of change carefully. Consider whether the logic between steps works.

What are the assumptions? Are they realistic? Are additional activities needed? Do other stakeholders need to behave differently?

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| **INTERROGATION 2** |
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### Q8: Revise your theory of change statement if needed or consider whether you need an additional theory of change, maybe for another stakeholder group.

Did your discussion at Q7 bring up any issues? Are there any gaps in your intervention? Write in your amended or additional theory of change here.

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| **THEORY OF CHANGE STATEMENT – DRAFT 2** |
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| **ADDITIONAL NOTES** |
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