

Pressure Test Your Nonprofit's Theory of Change

A nonprofit organization's theory of change is its conceptual road map to achieving the impact it seeks—its intended impact. But how do you know the one you have is set up to succeed? To get started, give your theory of change a pressure test by evaluating it against the following criteria. They can help you identify ways you might consider revising or updating your theory of change.

Do you have the right...

Approach

- Our approach reflects the best thinking and practices in our industry
- The data on the outcomes of our work demonstrates that our approach has impact
- All elements of our theory of change contribute in important ways to our intended impact

Support

- The community we work with (clients, partners, etc.) will be supportive of this approach
- Our staff will be supportive of this approach
- The key influencers in our community will be supportive of this approach
- We can identify funding sources (government, philanthropy, etc.) who will be supportive of this approach

Capabilities

- Our organization already has or could develop the talent and systems needed for our approach to succeed
- We are better equipped than others to deliver on critical elements of this approach

Equation

- Our theory of change will realistically achieve our intended impact

