

**Documenting the assumptions and evidence for your theory of change**

**Assumptions & Evidence**

Once you have established your basic theory of change by identifying your intended outcomes and the activities that lead to these outcomes, it is time to think about the assumptions that underlie your theory.

Assumptions typically underpin why you think one factor or outcome will lead to another. They are underlying beliefs that you have formed about certain actions, sequence of events and the environment you operate in. They may be conditions that are taken for granted or assumed to be understood. It is important to clearly state the assumptions that underpin your theory, so you can check the validity of your assumptions later. Think about whether you have any evidence to suggest that your assumptions are correct and think about where potential gaps could be.

Use the table below to state the assumptions that underlie your model. Think about e.g. which assumptions are most critical to your success; which pose the biggest risk to your theory; or which are the most unstable. In the “Evidence” column you should indicate any evidence you have or can cite supporting each assumption.

Assumption - EXAMPLE	Evidence - EXAMPLE
<i>We assume that confidence and know-how are the main barriers to gaining employment.</i>	<i>Academic literature; experience from other programmes.</i>
<i>We assume that participants will find living-wage jobs near to where they live, and that participants want to take up work.</i>	<i>Research from job boards, experience from having run similar programmes.</i>
<i>We assume that participants will improve their self-sufficiency by increasing job skills.</i>	<i>National studies on the importance of work to self-sufficiency.</i>
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