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Theory of Change

M&E Workshop
Bangladesh
January 2016

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Session Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to describe the purposes and elements of a Theory of Change (ToC).

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What is a ToC?

The ToC is a diagram and complementary narrative that describes in detail how a design team thinks their interventions' outputs will interact with:

- other concurrent interventions and
- contextual conditions

to stimulate or enable a series of outcomes that lead to the intended objectives and ultimate goal.

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What is a ToC?

The diagram describes, step by step, the sequence of changes hypothesized to occur

- as the result of specific actions
- in a given context
- until all conditions necessary to achieve desired objectives are met.

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What is a ToC?

The complementary narrative is used:

- to clarify or define terms in the diagram
- to present logical rationales with literary references for relations that are not obvious
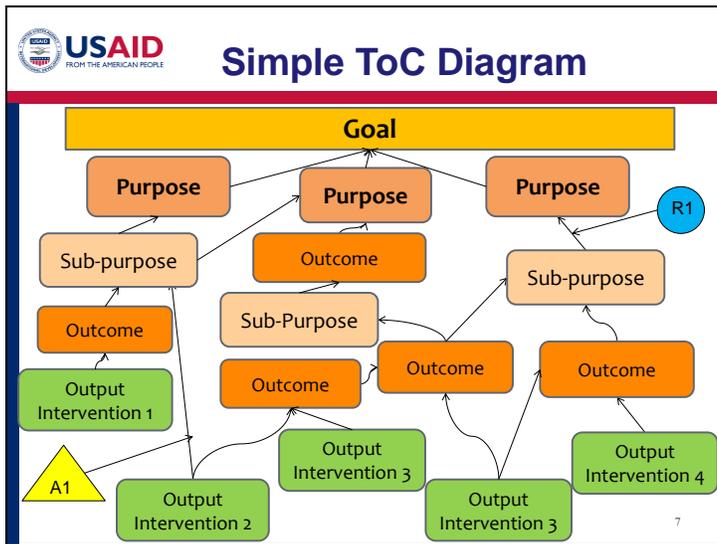- to further develop on underlying assumptions
- other?

The narrative should not repeat what is clearly understandable from the diagram.

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Why do we need it?

- To identify all of the conditions necessary and sufficient to achieve a goal, starting from the current situation
- To clarify how interventions are expected to contribute to these outcomes
- To explain the sequence in which the changes are expected and need to occur
- To explain the assumptions (rationales and conditions) behind the sequence of changes
- To identify other interventions and conditions that are critical to assure all necessary conditions
- To recognize where there might be gaps
- To know what to watch for when monitoring progress 6

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ToC Elements

- Goal
- Purposes
- Sub-Purposes
- Pathways
- Outcomes
- Outputs
- Assumptions

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USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE   ToC Elements: **Goal**

- States the intended lasting impact to achieve in the target population

- Is worded as a measureable change.

Common goals of FFP development projects are:

  ❑ Improved food security in targeted areas
  ❑ Improved household resilience in targeted areas

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USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE   ToC Elements: Purposes

Purposes are the conditions (relationships, behaviors, infrastructure, services, systems, institutions, laws, policies, etc.) that:

- the activity will address

- are near the achievement of the goal

FFP development projects generally relate to the pillars of food security: food availability, access and use.

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ToC Elements: Outcomes

- An outcome is a condition that does not currently exist but must be in place for a higher outcome to be achieved.
- Outcomes should be stated as a measureable change
- An intermediate outcome is a change that must occur between outcomes at different levels.
- The purposes and sub-purposes are intermediate outcomes
- Some outcomes depend on actions and actors outside the activity

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ToC Elements: Outcomes

As examples:

An increase in income may be an outcome of trainees' use of new skills.

Greater diversification of women's diets may be an outcome of kitchen gardens planted with a greater variety of vegetables

More timely use of health services may be an outcome of bringing services closer to home.

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ToC Elements: Outputs

Interventions are actions (transferring goods or services, training, organizing, and supporting in other ways) with intent to promote necessary outcomes.

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ToC Elements: Outputs

Outputs are the direct products or deliverables of interventions:

- ❑ Number of people trained
- ❑ Goods or services delivered
- ❑ Consulting sessions completed
- ❑ Households visited
- ❑ Groups or committees formed
- ❑ Infrastructure built

They often can be counted

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USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE   **ToC Elements: Outputs**

The ToC must include all outputs from activity interventions as well as outputs from other interventions that are needed to assure that all outcomes depicted in the pathways occur – even if not undertaken by the activity actors.
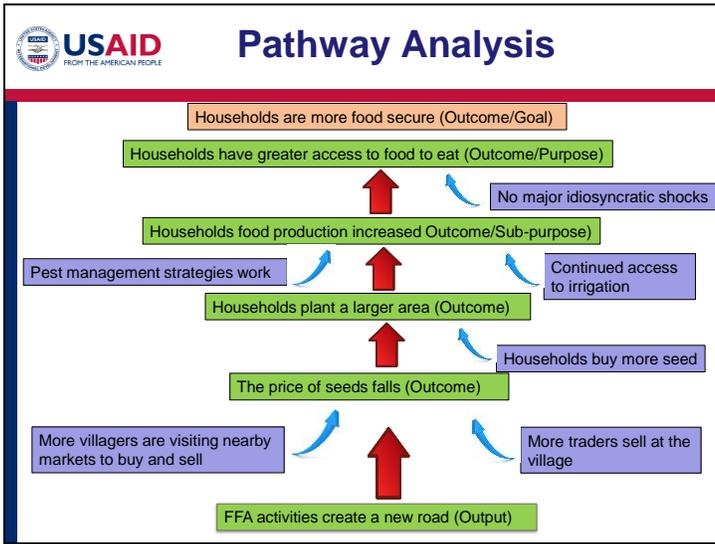
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USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE   **ToC Elements: Pathways**

- A pathway is the sequence in which outcomes occur, beginning from outputs of interventions and moving towards the goal.

- Pathways are depicted using arrows that show the sequence in which outputs and outcomes occur.

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ToC Elements: Assumptions

- *Assumptions* are the critical conditions that already exist or are forecasted for the near future and that must continue in order to assure the achievement of results.

- The major types of assumptions are:

  - *Rationales*
  - *Global Assumptions*

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USAID **ToC Elements: Assumptions**

- *Rationales*: Evidence that justifies that a condition or a set of conditions is necessary and sufficient to produce the given outcome.

- *Global assumptions*: Fundamental conditions necessary to the success of the entire ToC, such as environmental or operational conditions out of the control of the actors but which must exist for the entire ToC to be relevant and work.
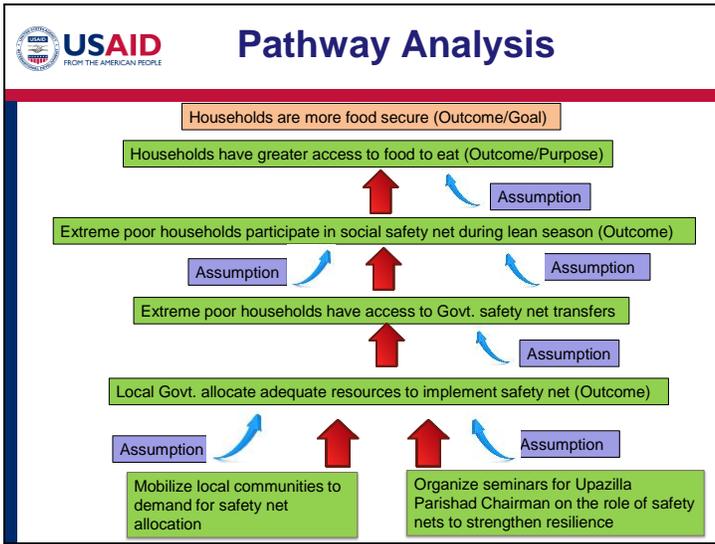
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USAID **ToC Elements: Assumptions**

Assumptions may either be stated on the diagram and/or a symbol may be used to reference a statement in the complementary narrative.

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The ToC Narrative

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The narrative can be used to further
describe:

- the assumptions and why they are
  important, and to provide references to
  support rationales

- the contributions of actors outside the
  activity

It should not repeat what is clearly
understandable from the diagram.

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ToC Resources

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- ActKnowledge ToC Technical Papers –
  Taplin, Clark, Collins and Colby; 2013
- TOPS ToC Workshop Materials – TANGO:
  Frankenberger & Downen; October 2014
- www.theoryofchange.org

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