



UNITED  
NATIONS  
DEVELOPMENT  
GROUP



# THEORY OF CHANGE

UNDAF COMPANION GUIDANCE

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this companion guidance is to provide practical and hands-on technical guidance on developing a theory of change as an integral part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process. It should be read as a complement to the 2017 UNDAF Guidance and relates closely to the other seven companion guidance papers on programming principles, the UN Vision 2030, the Common Country Analysis (CCA), communications and advocacy, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation, and funding to financing.

A theory of change is a method that explains how a given intervention, or set of interventions, are expected to lead to a specific development change, drawing on a causal analysis based on available evidence. In the UNDAF context, a thorough theory of change helps guide the development of sound and evidence-based programme strategies, with assumptions and risks clearly analysed and spelled out.

To facilitate the process of developing a sound theory of change, the present companion guidance proceeds as follows:

- Section 2, The Concept, further defines the theory of change and explains its purpose as applied to the UNDAF process. It also offers a brief outline of the methodology used to develop a theory of change.
- Section 3, Moving from Theory to Practice, provides a step-by-step methodology, presenting in greater detail each of four key steps required in the process.
- Section 4, Lessons Learned and Tips, emphasizes the need to validate the theory of change, including a quality assurance check list. It also explains how to reflect the theory of change in different sections of the UNDAF document.
- Finally, links to helpful tools and references are provided in Section 5.

# 2. THE CONCEPT

## WHAT IS A THEORY OF CHANGE?

A theory of change is a method that explains how a given intervention, or set of interventions, is expected to lead to specific development change, drawing on a causal analysis based on available evidence. A theory of change for the UNDAF must be driven by sound analyses, consultation with key stakeholders and learning on what works and what does not in diverse contexts drawn from the experiences of the UN and its partners. A theory of change helps to identify solutions to effectively address the causes of problems that hinder progress and guide decisions on which approach should be taken, considering UN comparative advantages, effectiveness, feasibility and uncertainties that are part of any change process. A theory of change also helps to identify the underlying assumptions and risks that will be vital to understand and revisit throughout the process to ensure the approach will contribute to the desired change.

## PURPOSE: WHY USE A THEORY OF CHANGE?

First, development challenges are complex, and are typically caused by many factors and layers that are embedded deeply in the way society functions. For example, opening a legal aid clinic may not lead to more women accessing justice services unless issues of cultural sensitivities, needed legal reforms and childcare constraints are addressed as well. A theory of change can help a United Nations Country Team (UNCT) systematically think through the many underlying and root causes of development challenges, and how they influence each other, when determining what an UNDAF should address as a priority to maximize the UN's contribution to achieving development change.

Second, a theory of change provides a framework for learning both within and between programming cycles. By articulating the causes of a development challenge, making assumptions explicit on how the proposed strategy is expected to yield results, and testing these assumptions against evidence—including what has worked well, or not, in the past—the theory of change helps ensure a sound logic for achieving change. The theory of change also helps make course corrections if the selected

approach is not working or if anticipated risks materialize. New learning and lessons from monitoring and evaluation help refine assumptions and inform decisions on how an approach should be adapted to deliver planned results. Adjustments to the theory of change should also be made in light of changing circumstances, especially in response to crisis and shocks, as well as part of regular monitoring.

Third, the theory of change is increasingly being utilized as a means for developing and managing partnerships and partnership strategies. The process of agreeing on a theory of change establishes different views and assumptions among programme planners, beneficiaries, donors, programme staff, etc. It can foster consensus and motivate stakeholders by involving them early in the planning process and by showing them how their work contributes to long-term impact. It can help others to understand and support the UN's contribution to change, as well as strengthen collaboration with other organizations that aim to contribute to the same outcomes, leading to stronger or new partnerships and better complementarity and coordination.

Finally, a common theory of change for an UNDAF is the basis for more effective and unified communication by the UNCT by clearly articulating its shared vision and strategy for how change can happen. A theory of change diagram or short text is a neat and succinct way to summarize the purpose of the UN's work and communicate it to beneficiaries, stakeholders, donors, governments and other partners. It emphasizes real change to counterbalance discussions focused solely on resources, activities and outputs of different members of the UNCT.

## METHODOLOGY: HOW TO DEVELOP A THEORY OF CHANGE?

The UNDAF approach to the theory of change aims to bring improved clarity and quality to the process of programme design and implementation using a simple, flexible methodology. An overarching theory of change should be developed for the UNDAF to help explain the outcome areas prioritized by the UN system and for gender equality if there is no standalone outcome on it.

In addition, theories of change can be elaborated for each outcome area as a basis for identifying and explaining the UNDAF outputs included in the joint Results Group work plans. This methodology recommends three key principles and four sequenced steps for developing a theory of change.

#### KEY PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING A THEORY OF CHANGE:

- a) It should be developed **consultatively** to reflect the understanding of all relevant stakeholders;
- b) It should be grounded in, tested with, and revised based on robust **evidence** at all stages; and
- c) It should support **continuous learning** and improvement from programme design to closure.

#### KEY STEPS FOR DEVELOPING A THEORY OF CHANGE:

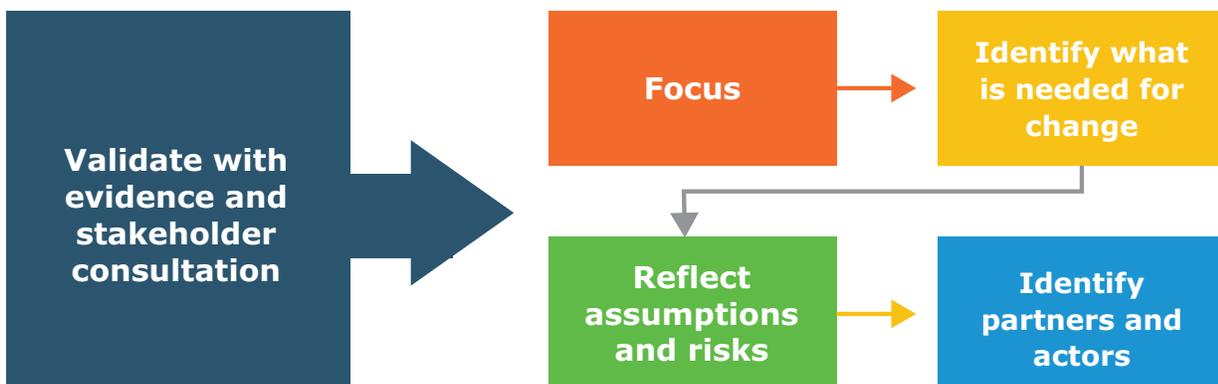
1. **Focus** on the high-level change the UN intends to contribute to in the context of the [CCA \(hyperlink to CCA CGP\)](#) and the [UN Vision 2030 \(hyperlink to UN Vision 2030 CGP\)](#)
2. Identify **what is needed** for the desired development change to happen, informed by the problem tree analysis in the CCA and other evidence, and how partners are contributing to this change.

3. Establish and make explicit the related key **assumptions** underpinning the theory of how change happens, and major **risks** that may affect it.
4. **Identify partners and actors** who will be most relevant for achieving each result, taking into account the related risks and assumptions.

While developing the theory of change, it is necessary to **validate** the various steps against available evidence and the perspectives of other stakeholders to ensure that the analysis is sound and the key assumptions are plausible, including assumptions about the roles that will be played by partners and other key actors. It is also important that the theory of change is consistent with the overall purpose and principles of the UNDAF.

Figure 1 illustrates the four key steps for developing a theory of change and the importance of validating each step against available evidence. In Section 3, the four key steps are discussed in detail, providing a step-by-step methodology.

**Figure 1: UNDAF theory of change steps**



# 3. MOVING FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

## STEP 1: FOCUS

This step is normally done as part of the [UN Vision 2030 \(hyperlink to UN Vision 2030 CGP\)](#) exercise and based on evidence in the [CCA \(hyperlink to CCA CGP\)](#), **identifying the change needed in the five years covered by the UNDAF.**

The UN Vision 2030 provides the strategic prioritization that defines the UN system's primary contributions to supporting national attainment of the SDGs, based on the its comparative advantage and prioritizing issues that have a direct bearing on the lives of women and girls, as well as the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in the country. The overall UNDAF theory of change shows how UNDAF strategic priorities will support the country to progress from the situation described in the CCA to the achievement of national priorities and the SDGs as summarized in the UN Vision 2030.

The first step in developing the UNDAF theory of change involves selecting the key development challenges identified in the CCA that must be addressed in the medium term in order to achieve the SDGs. Noting current and possible future opportunities, the priorities of the government and of the populations concerned, and the capacity of all actors including the UNCT, the selection should determine the strategic priorities for UNDAF programming based on a set of criteria, including:

- **Equity:** The challenges and changes selected for further elaboration in the UNDAF theory of change should be those that are most important if development gains and human rights are to be enjoyed equitably across society, and in line with the principles of leaving no one behind and fostering gender equality.
- **Comparative advantage:** Does the UN have the mandate to address the problem and ability to develop lasting national capacities in this area? What are the areas where the UN can have the greatest impact?
- **Feasibility:** Is it likely that the UN can work in this area successfully?

## STEP 2: CHANGE ANALYSIS

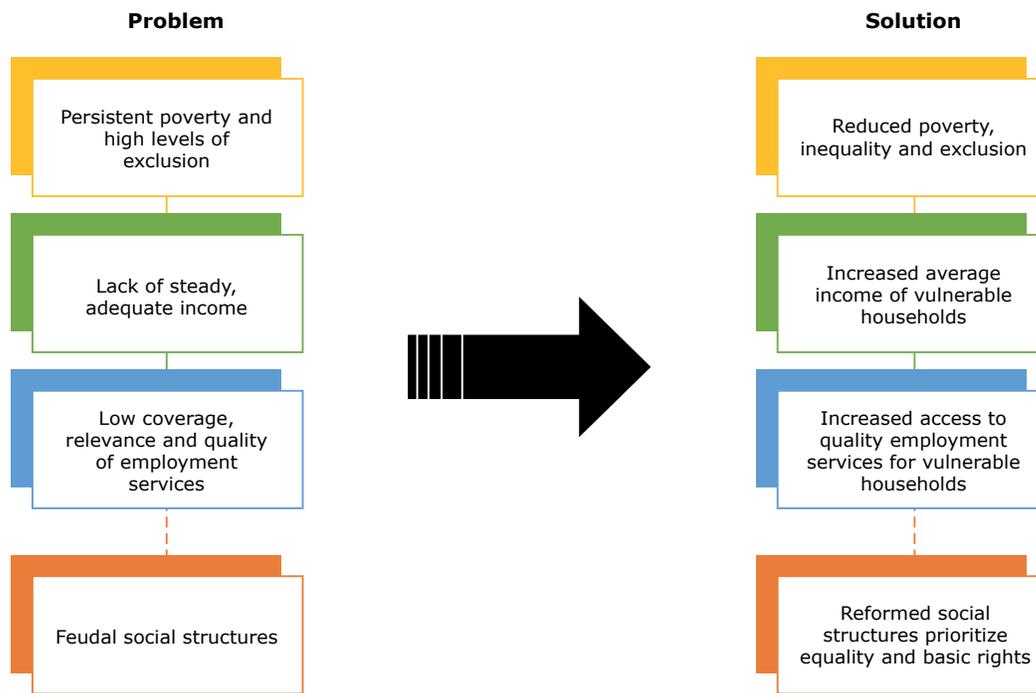
Having identified in Step 1 a small number of high-level changes, the UNCT should identify what is needed for the desired development changes to happen, informed by the CCA and other evidence, including previous learning, evaluation and what partners are already doing to contribute to this change. This exercise should be participatory to the extent possible, in order to develop a shared understanding and validate the choice among partners. It should also draw on the CCA's analysis of compliance with international norms and standards, and adherence to national commitments emerging from intergovernmental mechanisms and processes, particularly those that relate most directly to the high-level changes identified in Step 1.

The UNCT should start with the CCA identifying the immediate, underlying and structural/root causes of the high-level changes to be addressed during the UNDAF period, such as those related to multidimensional poverty, inequalities and discrimination, and the reasons why particular groups are left behind. One possible approach to this is developing a **problem tree**. The problem tree can include both humanitarian and development challenges as appropriate, which can help identify the inter-relationships between them.

The various branches of the problem trees should identify specific areas of work, which can be organized in pathways linking various levels of causes (immediate, underlying and structural) and which can show interlinkages among each other. The problem tree can then be used to develop a **solution tree**, making sure to identify expected solutions for each level of causality (immediate, underlying and structural) of the problem tree, to maintain the integrity of the logical flow of solutions to achieve the desired change. The solution tree does not need to be an exact mirror of the problem tree. Rather, the problem tree should be used to ensure the causes of the development problem are addressed in the proposed solutions. Capacity development needs and solutions should be clearly reflected in the underlying level of the problem and solution trees.

This analysis should include identifying the proven and potential enablers of change in the country to tackle protracted problems and bottlenecks, and advance UN programming, building on and going beyond what was achieved in the previous UNDAF cycle. The simplified example in Figure 2 illustrates how to turn a problem tree into a solution tree for one illustrative branch.

**Figure 2: Turning a branch of a problem tree into a solution tree**



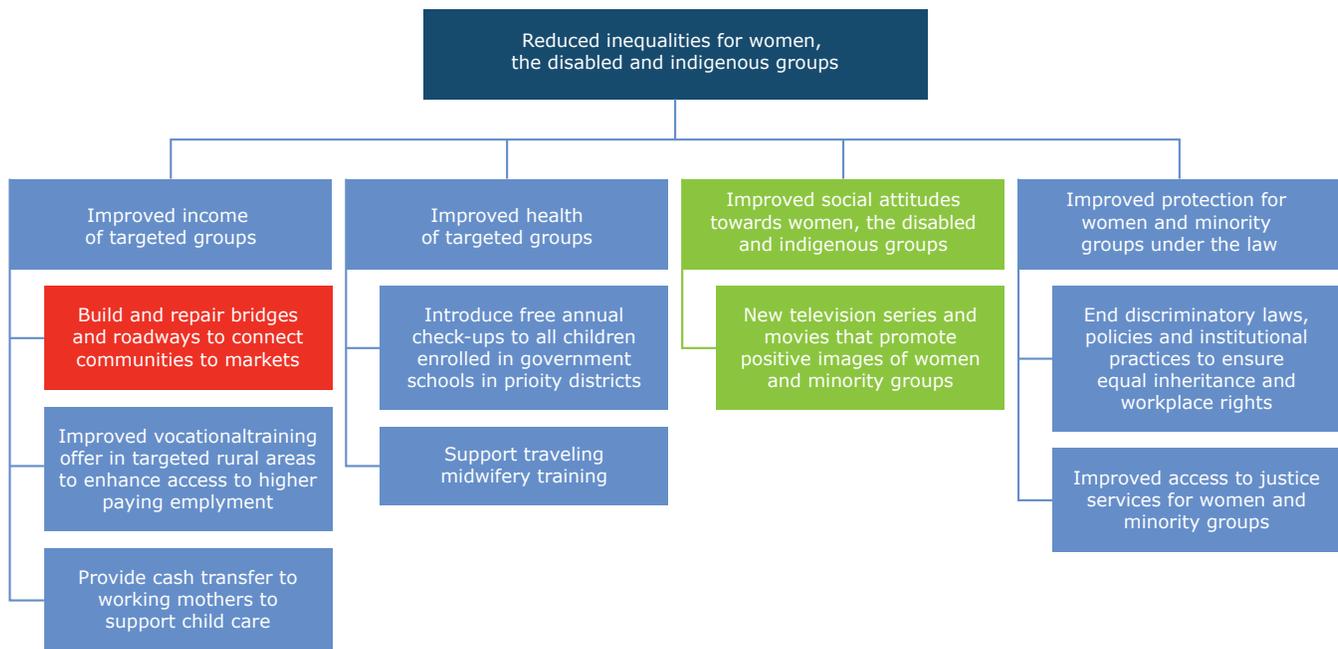
Envisaged solutions should be consistent with the criteria identified to focus the work of the UNCT in Step 1. The solution tree should also include how key partners are contributing to the development change, as identified in the funding to financing analysis. When articulating the solutions proposed by the UN in the country context, it is useful to demonstrate that they respond to the parameters of:

- Equity:** Are particular aspects of the solution tree most important to address in order to ensure that development gains and human rights are enjoyed equitably across society to leave no one behind and foster gender equality?
- Comparative advantage:** Which specific areas of the solution tree does the UN have the mandate and abilities to address? Are other partners already working to deliver some of the changes identified as needed steps within the solution tree? How does the UN's offer fit with those of other partners in jointly contributing to the desired higher level change?
- Feasibility:** Is it likely that the UN can implement the solution successfully? Considerations may include available resources, likelihood of partnerships necessary to realize the intended change, key risks relating to political, cultural or operational factors, and whether these can be effectively managed.
- What works and what does not work well:** What is the evidence, based on UN and other previous experiences, on the scale of change that has been achieved with this type of solution, in similar contexts? Have there been situations where this type of solution has not worked well? Can we learn from past mistakes to deploy better solutions? UNDAF mid-term reviews and evaluations are particularly useful sources of evidence.

Figure 3 illustrates a simplified solution tree. The tree shows the high-level outcomes that are necessary to achieve the ultimate objective of reduced inequalities for women, the disabled and indigenous groups. The evidence shows us that these high-level outcomes are best achieved by a set of output level results working together. While this entire diagram may represent all of the changes that need to take place in order for the objective to be achieved, the UNCT may only prioritize certain areas in the UNDAF on the understanding that other elements will be addressed by other partners and/or are not feasible for the UNCT to address during this period. In the below example, the UNCT has opted to focus on areas in light

blue, as the areas in orange and green will be adequately addressed by the international financial institutions and private sector. The UNCT will still monitor progress of the entire solution tree, however, because failure to achieve results in an area where other partners work will most likely hinder the achievement of the ultimate objective.

**Figure 3: A simplified solution tree**



The cause and effect relationship between the different results can be represented in graphic form through arrows and lines demonstrating relationships horizontally in addition to vertically. The UNCT should review the envisaged UNDAF results and development changes to ensure that they focus on the four UNDAF programming principles, in particular the overarching principle of leaving no one behind. Specifically, before moving on to define assumptions and risks, this should involve a review to ascertain the following:

1. The theory of change must clearly be targeted towards changes and solutions that benefit the most vulnerable and marginalized individuals and groups in society.
2. The theory of change should directly address issues of inequality and discrimination, building on the CCA to construct a model of change that tackles underlying and possibly root causes, not just the immediate ones.
3. The theory of change should be explicit in identifying solutions that target the needs of women and girls, and ensure that they are equally benefitting from the envisaged change.

4. The theory of change should envisage sustainable and inclusive changes by looking to strengthen the effectiveness of institutions and mechanisms that are targeted to monitor, track and empower those who are left behind, or at the risk of being left behind.

### STEP 3: MAKE ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS EXPLICIT

Establish and make explicit the related key **assumptions** underpinning the theory of how change happens and major **risks** that may affect it. This includes identifying why solutions are the key drivers of change in a given context, and the factors that may influence these drivers.

Assumptions are things taken for granted, accepted as certain to happen. It is particularly important that the assumptions underpinning the proposed causal relationship between different results and other factors be made explicit (if X, then Y, because Z) and are assessed against available evidence. Assumptions to be considered include, for example, those about:

- **Causality:** What leads to what, and how? Through what mechanism(s)? This includes how the proposed solutions contribute to the intended high-level development change.

- **Implementation:** Assumptions about how UNCT interventions should be designed and targeted in order to deliver the intended results for the intended target groups.
- **External factors:** Assumptions about the influence of issues outside the area of work that can facilitate or hinder the expected change.

For each assumption the UNCT identifies in the theory of change, it should consider:

- **Does this fully explain what is thought will happen?** If not, it may be necessary to refine the assumption or the identified solution, or add new assumptions to explain the expected change process fully.
- **Is the assumption plausible?** Do the available evidence and the views and experience of UN and other stakeholders indicate that this assumption is likely to hold true in practice?
- **Does the assumption need to be tested?** Is further evidence needed as to whether change happens in the way assumed in this context, e.g., with an evaluation or by monitoring this closely during implementation?

Embedding **risk analysis** in a theory of change is also a crucial and challenging element of design, but exploring assumptions first can help in the identification of the risks. Often assumptions and risks are inversely related. For example, if it is assumed that employment services must be targeted towards vulnerable households in order to contribute towards reducing poverty, we might define a risk around the possibility that employment services are not properly targeted to reach vulnerable households. A theory of change approach encourages consideration of various types of potential risks, including:

- **Environmental and political:** Political risks from larger developments in the country such as elections and stakeholder sensitivities around particular issues and programmatic areas; high levels of turnover in policy and mid-level positions in government; disaster risk, changes in national policies or sharp fluctuations in commodity prices.
- **Opportunities:** Is the UNCT positioned to take advantage of future opportunities that may positively impact the achievement of results?
- **Design:** Difficulties might exist in targeting new and/or prioritizing specific groups and locations, such as the lack of data or access; there may be questions around the ability to retain flexibility to

rethink approaches and strategies when presented with new data from monitoring or external sources.

- **Partnerships:** Possible conflicts or tensions among the perspectives, interests and demands of partners; ability to incorporate new partnerships when opportunities arise.

During the preparation of a theory of change, it is not always possible to anticipate and prepare for the full range of risks. But it is essential to isolate the most important ones so that when certain risks materialize, the UNCT can revise assumptions and adapt the theory of change and the related strategy. Identifying relevant risks at the start of the UNDAF also helps design suitable strategies that can help manage those risks, so that the UNCT is better able to take advantage of new opportunities and mitigate threats.

#### STEP 4: IDENTIFY PARTNERS AND KEY ACTORS

**Identify partners and actors** by revisiting each result, including the related risks and assumptions. Focus in particular on key actors likely to have a direct role in determining the success or failure of the change effort, and partners with whom the UNCT will work most directly to bring about change. For instance, contributions from other partners as identified in the funding to financing analysis should be reflected in the overall solution tree, even if these are not something the UNCT will work on directly. This helps to identify the key linkages and enablers for achieving the SDGs.

The UNCT should identify specific members able to work on different results based on their mandates, capacity and available resources. The theory of change should help clarify which UN entity does what, in which areas two or more entities are expected to work together, where collaboration is necessary to achieve the expected change, and how to avoid overlapping to maximize the use of available resources.

Following this, it should be evident if there are elements of the proposed theory of change that are vital to the success of all or part of the UNDAF, but which the UN is not able to address directly through its programming work. These elements of the theory of change may not appear directly in the UNDAF results framework, but they need to be recognized as factors that can affect the achievement of the UNDAF results. The UNCT may also identify opportunities to address them through other engagement strategies in the UNDAF, such as through awareness-raising and advocacy, in order to leverage the resources and capacities of non-UN partners (including civil society and the private sector).

# 4. LESSONS LEARNED AND TIPS

## VALIDATE AND QUALITY ASSURE THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Validating the theory of change against available evidence and the perspectives of other stakeholders ensures that the key assumptions are plausible, including assumptions about the roles that will be played by partners and other key actors. It also assures the quality of the theory of change so that it meets the required standards and is consistent with the overall purpose and principles of the UNDAF.

The UNCT should work on validating and quality assuring the theory of change throughout the four steps described in detail in the previous section:

1. Validating the **focus** of the theory of change requires due consideration of available evidence on national development priorities, identification of the needs of the poorest and marginalized, and the UNCT comparative advantage. It also requires consultations with key stakeholders, including government, civil society, direct beneficiaries, academia and international development actors, to ensure all perspectives are taken into consideration.
2. The **solutions** identified in the theory of change should be validated with available evidence against the UNCT comparative advantages, to determine what worked or did not work in the past, including how results can be more efficiently and effectively achieved, as well as potential risks and expected sustainability of the proposed solutions.
3. It is vitally important that the **assumptions** are tested against available evidence and are discussed with relevant stakeholders to ensure they are plausible and accurately capture the expected change process.
4. Both the division of labour among UN entities and **partnership** strategies need to be validated based on prior learning, through the engagement of key stakeholders, and ensuring consistency with the funding to financing analysis.

The decision on which external actors to engage in the validation step should be undertaken by the UNCT based on the local context, ensuring as much as possible that the voices and views of women, youth, duty-bearers, claim-holders and vulnerable communities are sought and heard. Similarly, the format and process for validating the different steps of the theory of change should be agreed by the UNCT based on what fits best with the local situation and circumstances.

<b>QUALITY ASSURANCE CHECKLIST TO ENSURE A THEORY OF CHANGE:</b>	
✓	Is based on a <b>collaborative and participatory process</b> , involving multiple stakeholder perspectives and allowing the views of women, youth, duty-bearers, claim-holders and vulnerable communities to be reflected during theory of change development and validation
✓	Is clearly targeted towards changes that will benefit the <b>most vulnerable and marginalized</b> individuals and groups in society
✓	Addresses issues of <b>inequality and discrimination</b> by tackling root and underlying causes in addition to immediate causes
✓	Explicitly targets <b>women and girls</b> and ensures that they are equal beneficiaries of change
✓	Identifies <b>specific development changes</b> to be realized for women and other targeted groups, rather than relying on assumptions about how particular groups benefit
✓	Envisages sustainable and inclusive changes by looking to strengthen the effectiveness of <b>institutions and mechanisms</b> that are tasked to monitor, track and empower those who are left behind or at the risk of being left behind
✓	Contributes to <b>resilience</b> and reductions in potential shocks and stresses, including those caused by the effects of climate change, epidemics, natural hazards <sup>1</sup> and conflict
✓	Addresses poverty-environment linkages and contributes to enhancing <b>sustainability</b>
✓	Addresses or mitigates <b>structural causes of violence</b> that lead to or result from violation or non-fulfilment of rights
✓	<b>Refers to evidence</b> , knowledge and lessons learned from credible sources such as evaluations, analysis, monitoring and UN strategies/guidance, as well as to national capacity assessments and strategies
✓	Clearly states <b>assumptions</b> and <b>risks</b> most relevant to whether change will be realized
✓	Identifies who does what within the UNCT, as well as the <b>key partners and actors</b> whose common effort will be required in order for change to take place
✓	Shows a <b>plausible, clear, logical flow</b> to describe how the planned intervention intends to contribute to the desired development change, without any leaps of faith or gaps in logic
✓	Is ideally presented with a <b>diagram and embedded in the narrative</b> of programme documents
✓	Identifies limitations in the available evidence basis for the theory of change that can be used to <b>inform evaluation</b> priorities and design
✓	Is based on a <b>collaborative and participatory process</b> , involving multiple stakeholder perspectives and allowing the views of women, youth, duty-bearers, claim-holders and vulnerable communities to be reflected during theory of change development and validation
✓	Is clearly targeted towards changes that will benefit the <b>most vulnerable and marginalized</b> individuals and groups in society

<sup>1</sup> The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 applies to the risk of small-scale and large-scale, frequent and infrequent, sudden and slow-onset disasters, caused by natural or man-made hazards as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks.

## APPLYING A THEORY OF CHANGE TO THE UNDAF PROCESS

A theory of change is not an add-on to the UNDAF; it helps guide the development of programme strategies through the UNCT thinking together about the causes of development challenges and selecting the right strategy based on evidence, learning and deliberate consideration of assumptions and risks. The CCA should provide much of the causal, partnership, resource and contextual risk analysis that will be used to develop a theory of change. The theory of change should be reflected in the UNDAF narrative and results matrix, including in the selection of outcomes, indicators to measure progress, risks and assumptions, and partnerships necessary to achieve results. The table below summarizes how the various elements of the theory of change can be used to develop the UNDAF narrative.

<b>USING A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE UNDAF</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Signature page</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Executive summary</b>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>A narrative summary of the UNDAF strategic priority areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the key causal factors contributing to the core development challenges, with a focus on those that will be addressed in the UNDAF, and explain how the causal analysis translates into the identified outcome areas and development solutions.</li> <li>• Specify how women and marginalized groups are affected differently by the development challenge, and if there are causes that are unique to these groups, requiring specific solutions.</li> <li>• Support this with references to evidence and its sources, including from evaluation.</li> </ul>
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Risks and assumptions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain why the programme priorities were chosen to best address the core development challenge, referring to key assumptions about how change will happen.</li> <li>• Explain the UNCT comparative advantage based on previous learning, what others are doing and what the team can do together with others.</li> <li>• Make sure risks derived from theories of change are properly taken into consideration and include relevant management and mitigation measures: what if societal and development dynamics do not work as assumed or circumstances change?</li> <li>• Support this with past evaluation findings and recommendations.</li> </ul>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Initiatives outside the results matrix</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the problem and solution analysis to explain how those initiatives are crucial to achieve the results captured in the results matrix, and how the UN will engage with partners to ensure collaboration and complementarities towards the achievement of the SDGs.</li> </ul>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Overall financing strategy and estimated resource requirements</b>
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Implementation arrangements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the analysis of who does what from Step 4 to ensure implementation arrangements clearly specify roles and responsibilities within the UNCT, highlighting coordination arrangements where necessary.</li> </ul>
<b>8.</b>	<p><b>Monitoring and evaluation provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there specific assumptions related to causality or relationships with other contextual factors that require more evidence and testing?</li> <li>• Ensure that key elements of the theory of change will be monitored and updated regularly as appropriate.</li> <li>• Evaluation should look at the validity of the theory of change and provide recommendations for its improvement and for future interventions.</li> </ul>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Communication of results</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the causal analysis agreed among partners and stakeholders to strengthen messages on the desired change, its relevance in the national context and the role of the UN.</li> </ul>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>UNDAF results matrix</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The selected outcomes should relate clearly to the high-level development changes and UNCT contributions discussed in the narrative.</li> <li>• The indicators should measure the development changes articulated in the theory of change, including for women and targeted marginalized groups.</li> </ul>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Legal clauses (Link to Legal Annex)</b>

Outcome-level theories of change that lead to the identification of outputs developed in UNDAF Results Groups should be linked to the overall UNDAF theory of change, in addition to any agency-specific theories of change that may be developed. These should be preserved as annexes to Results Group work plans, to be validated as part of regular monitoring and adjusted as needed. During implementation, information from monitoring can be related back to the theory of change to inform management decisions to ensure interventions and activities are adjusted to remain relevant and increase the likelihood of achieving change. Evaluation can be crucial during implementation or closure for validating theories of change and learning what works and what does not work well in different contexts. In fact, one purpose of a theory of change is to have a basis on which to support future evaluations. A theory of change contributes to ensuring that the UNDAF is evaluable.

# 5. TOOLS AND RESOURCES

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[Center for Theory of Change](#)



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**The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) unites the 31 UN funds, programmes, specialized agencies, departments, and offices that play a role in development. Since 2008, the UNDG has been one of the three pillars of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the highest-level coordination forum of the United Nations system.**

**At the regional level, six Regional UNDG Teams play a critical role in driving UNDG priorities by supporting UN Country Teams with strategic priority setting, analysis and advice.**

**At the country level, 131 UN Country Teams serving 165 countries and territories work together to increase the synergies and joint impact of the UN system.**

**The Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO) is the secretariat of the UNDG, bringing together the UN development system to promote change and innovation to deliver together on sustainable development.**