STRATEGIC PLANNING USING A THEORY OF CHANGE FRAMEWORK

The London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership Strategic Plan Formulation

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Background

- London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership established in 2009
- Have implemented two 3-year strategic plans since that time
- Subcouncils have focused on broad outcomes and engaged in activities to achieve these outcomes
- Many successes but many goals still to be achieved

Background

- What next?
- How do we engage in the most effective strategic planning:

Theory of Change

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

- A set of beliefs that guides thinking about how and why a complex change process will unfold...

HOW IT WORKS - AT ITS CORE

- We Start with Our Long-Term Goals
- And then...
- ... Work Backwards

DETAILS OF THE THEORY OF CHANGE

- A causal framework of how and why a change process will happen in a particular context
- Rather than projecting outcomes from our activities, a theory of change reverses that process by focusing FIRST on WHAT OUTCOME we are seeking (our goal) – then thoroughly considering all preconditions necessary
- Interventions and Activities are then based on our outcomes framework (So we know why we are doing them!)

DETAILS OF THE THEORY OF CHANGE

- It makes assumptions explicit and identifies rationales for all preconditions and interventions (activities)
- It includes built-in indicators so that we can determine whether we are on track over time
- A Theory of Change is both a “process” and a “product”

THEORY OF CHANGE: A ROADMAP

- A good theory of change helps us to develop a road map
- It identifies:
  - Where we want to go
  - The route we will take to get there
  - Why certain milestones are necessary steps in the path we will travel
- This is the pathway we want to build to get to where we want to be in our community

HOW DO WE DEVELOP THE ROADMAP?

- Start with the long-term goals we want for our community
  - For example
    - English language proficiency
    - Access to health care
    - Equal job prospects – employment rate, positions commensurate with qualifications, salary
- Then work backward through preconditions for getting to the goals

SOME CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF A THEORY OF CHANGE

- Outcomes and Preconditions, modelled in a causal pathway
- Interventions (activities) leading to the relevant Outcome(s)
- Assumptions
- Rationales
- Indicators

OUTCOMES

- Ultimate Outcome: Newcomers are successful in their new lives

- Long-Term Outcome: Newcomers arrive in a community and obtain jobs, their children graduate from school in the normal time frame and the families are readily able to gain critical academic, social and life skills

PRECONDITIONS

- Specifies what HAS to change if the long-term goal is going to be achieved

- This helps us avoid doing things that are good, but don't get us where we want to go...

INTERVENTIONS

- Actions or activities designed to achieve particular Outcomes
- Interventions follow Outcomes (not vice versa)
- By identifying interventions as supporting a particular outcome, we focus on what actually has to be done and who is best to do it
- Interventions can be placed on any part of an Outcomes framework map

ASSUMPTIONS

- Assumptions are beliefs about conditions that we think already exist and are critical to the validity of the theory of change we are creating
- In the process of developing a theory of change, assumptions will emerge and this can be very valuable
- It is important for us to recognize and keep track of these
- They must be aired and addressed: Are they correct? Should they be Preconditions?

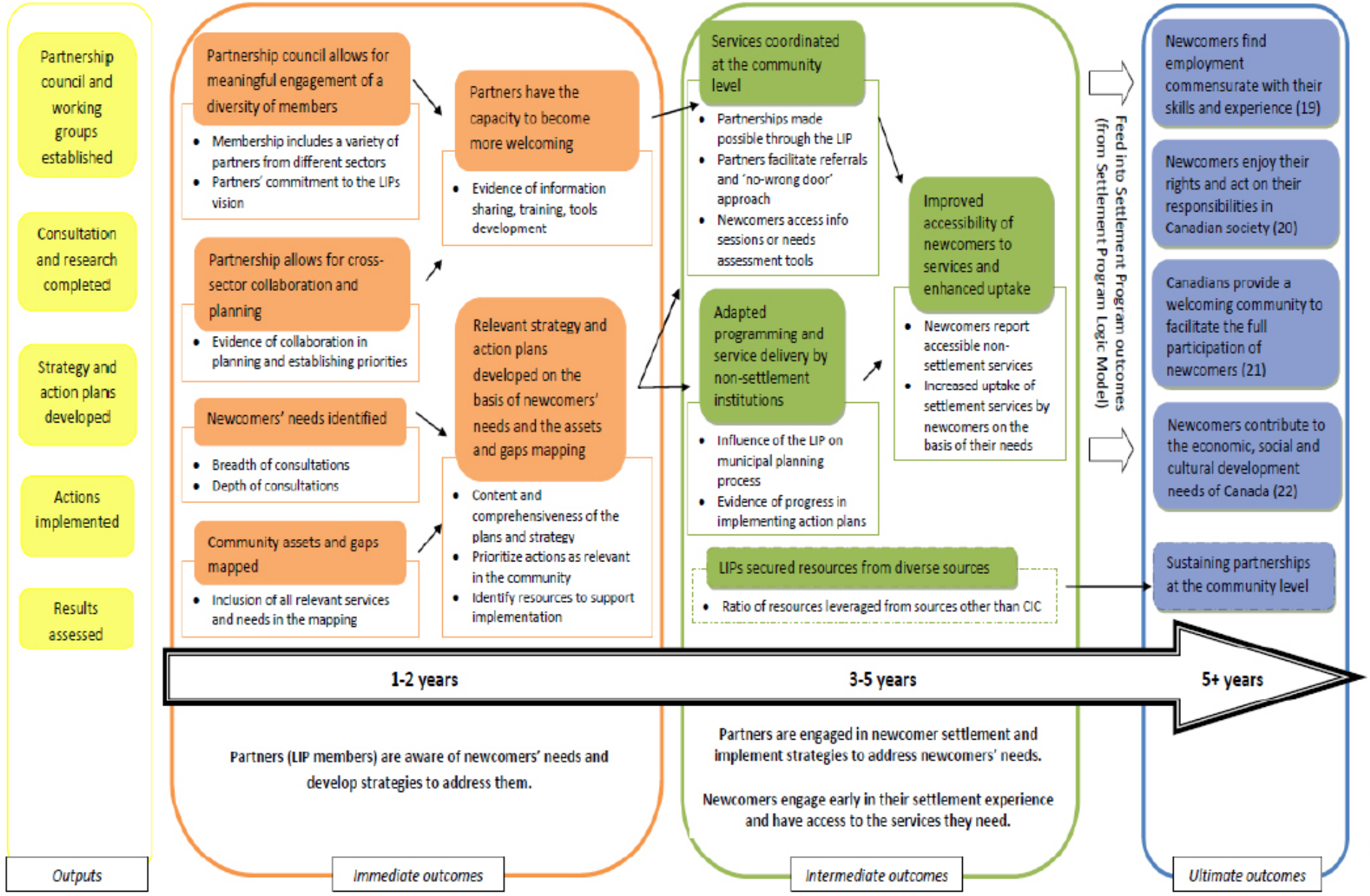
RATIONALES

- Why that Precondition?
  - Explaining EVERY step of the way why the short-term outcomes are needed and why they would lead to long-term outcomes
- Why that Intervention?
  - In a given context, why interventions (activities) done in a certain way are most likely to bring about the outcome
- A developed rationale contributes to the plausibility and feasibility of the theory

Annex 2 – LIPs Theory of Change

Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013

Local Immigration Partnerships : Expected results and contribution to settlement outcomes



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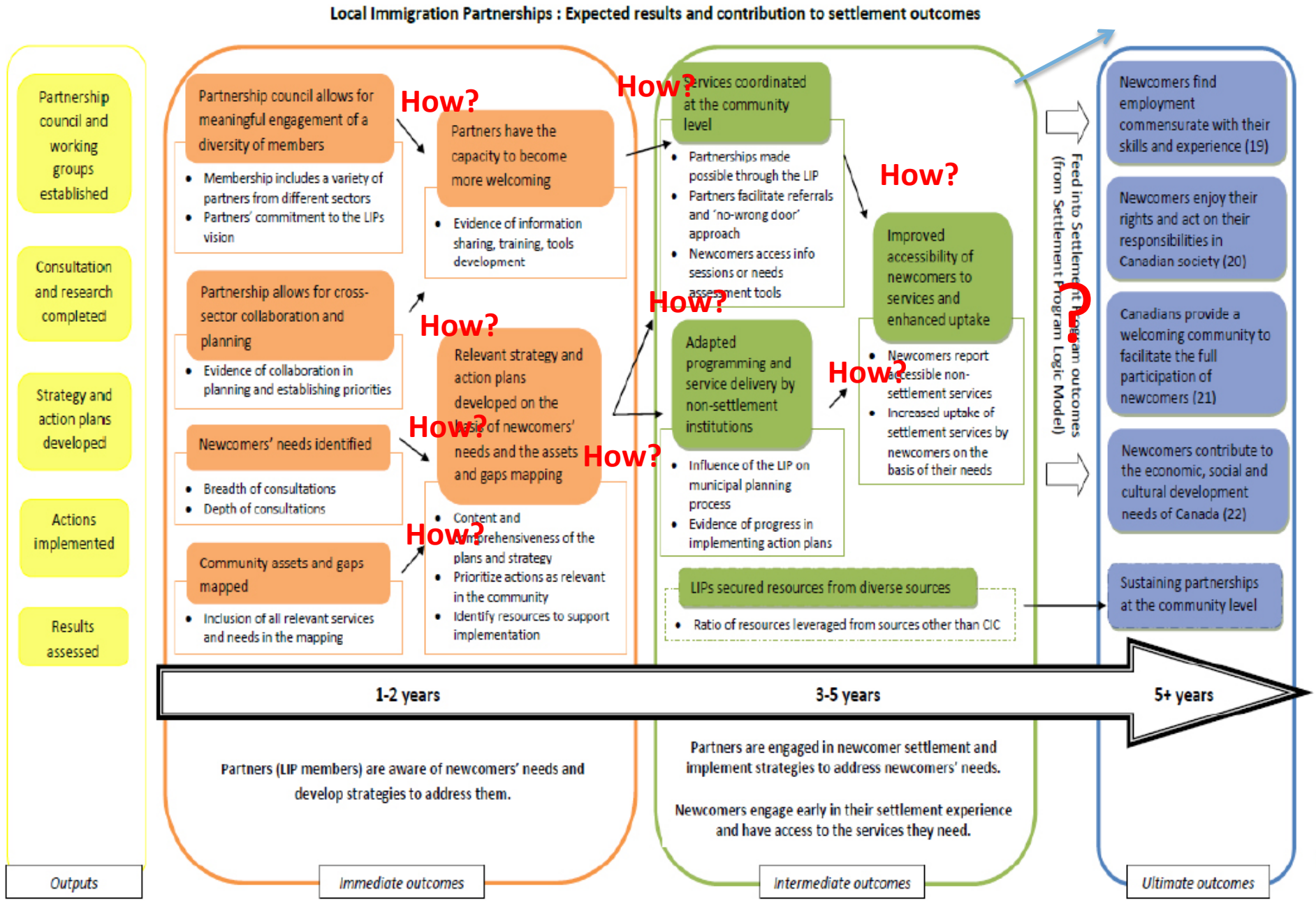
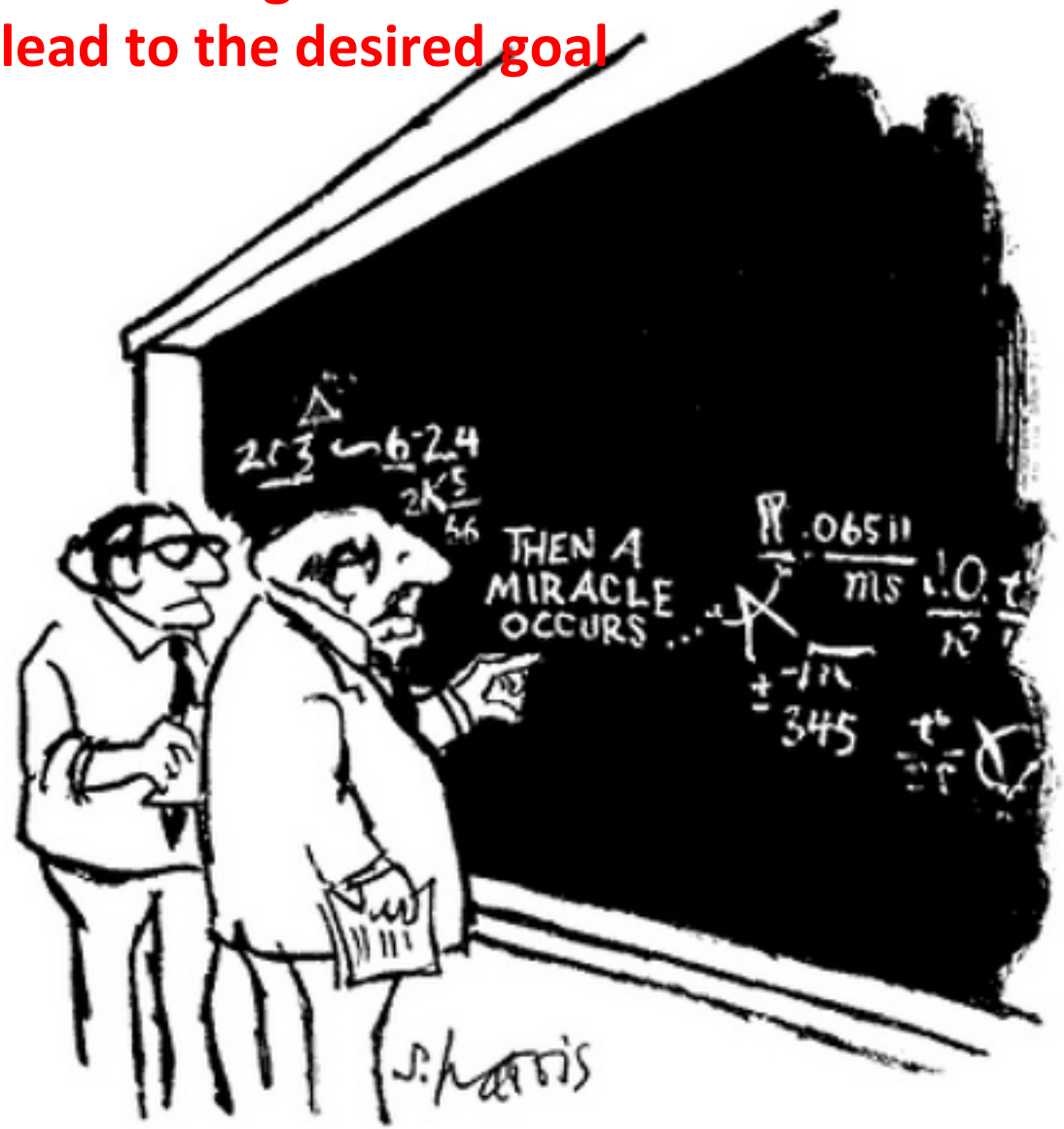


Theory of change focuses on filling in HOW and WHY an activity would lead to the desired goal



"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

- **Logic model** graphically illustrates program components
- **Theory of change is a causal model:**
  - it links outcomes and activities to explain **how** and **why** the desired change is expected to come about
  - it starts with a goal before deciding what program approach is needed

INDICATORS

- Measurable Indicators of Success or EVIDENCE
- What does it look like if the outcome is met?
- Example Outcome: Foreign trained professionals have access to their choice of professions
- Example Indicator: Proportion of foreign trained professionals who obtain their professional certification in their areas of expertise

VALUE OF INDICATORS

- Indicators help us decide on program activities

- Once we know WHO we are targeting and set realistic expectations given our resources about HOW MANY and HOW WELL we can accomplish the goal, then we design program activities geared to meet that indicator at that level

INDICATOR SPECIFICATION

- What? **Ability to achieve professional certification**
- For Whom? **Foreign trained professionals**
- How Many? **80% of those that apply get their certification**
- By When? **Within 12 months**

HOW WE PLAN TO USE OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

- The basis of an **Agreement**: buy-in of all partners about what needs to happen and who does it
- Our framework for **Implementation**: Required interventions/actions
- As a roadmap to our **Outcomes:** how we get where we want to go
- Our basis for **Monitoring and Evaluation**
- To demonstrate **Collective Impact** in a real way